

INSPECTION REPORT

ISLEWORTH AND SYON SCHOOL

Isleworth, Middlesex

LEA area: London Borough of Hounslow

Unique reference number: 102541

Headteacher: Mr Euan Ferguson

Reporting inspector: Helen Hutchings
7541

Dates of inspection: 11th – 15th March 2002

Inspection number: 192989

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary comprehensive with sixth form
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Ridgeway Road Isleworth Middlesex
Postcode:	TW7 5LJ
Telephone number:	(0208) 568 5791
Fax number:	(0208) 568 1939
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Tom Tranter
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7541	Helen Hutchings	Registered Inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9219	Ann Ferguson	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31441	Maggie King	Team Inspector	Chemistry Mathematics	Sixth form co-ordinator
1033	Howard Chester	Team Inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23016	Terry Morrison	Team Inspector	English	Assessment and monitoring
22370	Peter Harwood	Team Inspector	Science	
14522	Ian Smith	Team Inspector	ICT	
31688	Brian McGonagle	Team Inspector	Art	
21825	Eileen Kelly	Team Inspector	Design and technology	
14573	Hugh Wareing	Team Inspector	Geography Equal opportunities	How well are pupils taught?
30317	Liz Barthaud	Team Inspector	History Business	
22577	Margaret Hart	Team Inspector	Modern foreign languages	
20287	Desmond Harris	Team Inspector	Modern foreign languages	
8104	Joan Child	Team Inspector	Music	
7926	James Bowden	Team Inspector	Physical education Special educational needs	
23588	Charanjit Ajitsingh	Team Inspector	Religious education English as an additional language	
15372	Patricia Walker	Team Inspector	English	
31685	Valerie Girling	Team Inspector	Art	
18755	Roger Whittaker	Team Inspector	Sports studies	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Isleworth and Syon School is a voluntary controlled comprehensive school of average size for boys aged 11 – 18. The school is popular and oversubscribed, with 981 boys of whom 167 are in the sixth form. The social and economic background of the pupils is broadly average and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The overall attainment of pupils on entry to the school is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average, although the percentage with statements of such need is below average. About half the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and over a third of pupils speak English as an additional language, both of which are very high in relation to national proportions, the languages being mainly Punjabi, Urdu, Gujarati and Arabic. Around a sixth of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Isleworth and Syon is an effective school. Standards in the Key Stage 3 national tests in 2001 are very high when compared with similar schools. The standards achieved in GCSE are broadly in line with national averages and the percentage achieving the higher grades is above average in comparison with similar schools. Teaching is satisfactory overall and there is much that is good. The management and leadership of the school are good. Given the improving examination results, good attitudes of the pupils and because the strengths outweigh the weaknesses, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Results in GCSE are above national averages in English, mathematics, history and physical education. Attainment, as seen in the inspection, is above average in science and geography. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3.
- Pupils have good attitudes to school and this enables them to learn well.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- There is much good teaching and it is very good in music.
- Relationships throughout the school are good; the school is a friendly and inclusive place and racial harmony is very good.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum.
- Management at all levels is good and the headteacher provides strong leadership.

What could be improved

- Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently across the curriculum to develop pupils' skills fully.
- The consistency with which school policies are implemented, particularly in relation to literacy, numeracy, analysis of assessment data and behaviour management.
- The range of experiences in design and technology is too narrow to meet statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and pupils' attainment is below average.
- Legal requirements with respect to design and technology, religious education in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form and the requirement for a daily act of collective worship are not fully met.
- The quality of the environment is not stimulating in some areas of the school.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in 1996 improvement has been satisfactory overall. It has made a number of improvements and addressed most of the weaknesses identified at that time. Pupils' attainment has improved throughout the school and there is significantly more very good and excellent teaching, with less unsatisfactory teaching overall. The provision for ICT is now satisfactory, although more use could be made of it in other subjects. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and informing them of how work could be improved are now sound. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, but the school has not yet made appropriate arrangements for collective worship and religious education. There have been improvements to accommodation but deficiencies remain.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	C	C	C	C
A-levels/AS-levels	E	E	D	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils enter the school with a wide variation in their standards of attainment. Over the last few years the school is taking in more children with complex behavioural and learning difficulties. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2001, the proportion of pupils who achieved either the national standard of Level 5 or the higher standard of Level 6 or above was well above the national average in English and above the national averages in mathematics and science. Standards over the 1997-2001 period have risen above the rate of schools nationally. When comparisons are made with similar schools, as measured by the level of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, attainment is well above average in the English and mathematics tests; the proportion achieving Level 6 is very high and amongst the top five per cent of similar schools. The majority of pupils make good progress in their studies between Years 7 and 9. Progress overall is good in English, mathematics, art, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. It is unsatisfactory in design and technology.

Results in GCSE are generally in line with national averages. Based on the average total GCSE/GNVQ points score per pupil, results in 2001 and over the last three years were in line with the national average, although the school's improvement trend over a five-year period is below the national trend. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE/GNVQ A* - C grades was above average in comparison with similar schools in 2001. There is a relatively consistent pattern of success across all subjects. In the work seen in Key Stage 4 during the inspection pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is in line with those of pupils of a similar age nationally, while attainment in science is above that of other pupils of this age. In other subjects pupils are working at national levels in art, German and music, while performance is below in design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. Attainment is above national expectations in geography, history and physical education. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress over Years 10 and 11 and pupils achieve higher levels than might be expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils and sixth form students are enthusiastic about the school and their attitudes to learning are good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally satisfactory throughout the school and often good or very good in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	There is very good racial harmony throughout the school and relationships amongst staff and pupils are very good.
Attendance	Attendance has improved and is now good in the main school. There is some lateness, mainly confined to the ten-minute morning and afternoon registration periods, the latter mostly due to pupils being served late at lunch.

The behaviour of a handful of pupils is such that they are removed from lessons and work under the supervision of senior staff. Pupils are often boisterous in breaks when unsupervised but quickly settle when an adult intervenes. They are careless about litter. Pupils respond with confidence to the many opportunities to display responsibility.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Good teaching is a feature of the English, mathematics, science, geography, history, physical education and religious education departments and in music it is very good. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and guidance, mainly in one-to-one support and small group withdrawal lessons to address their needs. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is relevant to their needs.

The overall quality of boys' learning is good. On the whole, homework is well used to consolidate learning, but all teachers do not set it consistently. Boys have good opportunities to develop their speaking, listening, writing and reading skills, especially in history and English. They learn how to study independently and in groups, especially in geography and religious education. Opportunities for boys to learn about the application of ICT are limited and computers are not used well to enhance pupils' learning in all subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities and it is good in Key Stage 3. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for. The school is preparing well for the implementation of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs introduced in January 2002.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Overall, the quality of provision is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and that for their moral, social and cultural development is good. The course in personal, social and health education covers a broad range of appropriate topics.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is an efficient pastoral system providing very good support for pupils' personal development. Some formalising of procedures is needed, such as documenting risk assessments and widening the groups of staff who receive training in child protection.

The curriculum provides for the interests and aptitudes of the majority of pupils, although arrangements for religious education in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form and for design and technology do not meet statutory requirements fully. There are sound procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance, with a revised policy recently introduced. ICT is not integrated fully into other subjects. The range of sporting and other extra-curricular activities is impressive and enriches learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership and has a clear vision for the development of the school. Management at other levels is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is well established and strongly committed to the school's improvement and development, but has not yet found a way to fulfil its statutory responsibilities in some areas.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The senior team has a good awareness of existing weaknesses within the school's performance.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning effectively supports the school's educational priorities. Most subjects have appropriate accommodation but there are some deficiencies. Learning resources are adequate overall.

The leadership is good and is clearly focused on developments to secure improvements in educational standards and facilities, whilst maintaining the positive ethos in which all students are valued and enabled to achieve their potential. Middle managers have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. There have been difficulties in recruiting appropriately experienced teachers but the vast majority of lessons are taught by subject specialists. The school has a focus on improving the learning environment but there is unsatisfactory accommodation for some mathematics and design and technology lessons. The school's financial management and planning support its educational priorities effectively and take account of the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on boys and high expectations. • Pupils make good progress. • Teaching is good. • Efforts made by staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater consistency in setting homework. • More information about their children's progress. • Closer working with parents. • Behaviour. • Inadequate lavatories.

A very small proportion of parents attended the meeting held before the inspection and only eight per cent of parents returned the questionnaire. Inspectors' views largely support the aspects which please parents most and the fact that the lavatories are inadequate, but disagree with most of the other comments. Homework is generally used appropriately throughout the school to reinforce learning, but not all teachers set it consistently. There has been recent improvement in the information provided about pupils' progress and reports contain appropriate detail about levels being attained. Opportunities are given for parents to be involved with the school in line with those in other secondary schools. Behaviour was found to be generally satisfactory. Good behaviour management and, in particular, the use of 'internal exclusion' minimised disruption in lessons where behaviour was often good or very good. Corridors at break and change of lessons are noisy and younger pupils may well be jostled by older ones and choose to ignore this. There was no evidence of this being intended harassment or pupils' failure to report incidents relating to fear of retribution. Pupils have a good awareness of action to take where bullying was a problem and procedures were effectively employed in relation to an incident involving several pupils during the week of inspection.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

ISLEWORTH AND SYON SCHOOL

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form of this comprehensive boys' school is of average size and has been growing steadily. It now has 167 boys on roll. It is run as a consortium with three other local schools and some girls from other schools attend classes at this school. However, numbers of girls are always low. A significant number of boys travel to one of the other schools for at least one of their courses. The ethnic mix matches the mix in the main school. In most years about two thirds of Year 11 continue into the sixth form. The socio-economic background is mixed. There are no minimum entry requirements into the sixth form and the profile of students' attainment on joining the sixth form is below that which would normally be expected for courses at advanced level. The consortium offers GCE AS and A2-level courses and a small number of vocational options at advanced and intermediate levels. There is a personal, social and health education programme run on days when the timetable is suspended and a range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, although none is compulsory.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is effective in offering a wide range of courses at advanced level through good consortium arrangements and promoting at least satisfactory achievement in all subjects, very good achievement in some, notably art. Attainment has improved since the last inspection and is in line with national averages for boys in 2001. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and often good. Students' attitudes to their examination courses and relationships with each other and with staff are good. The curriculum beyond examination classes is limited and the systems for monitoring and improving attendance and achievement are unsatisfactory, particularly in the light of the consortium arrangements.

Strengths

- The variety of courses at AS and A2 offered through the consortium of four schools is wide, while remaining cost-effective.
- Relationships between students and between students and staff are co-operative and support learning well.
- Standards of attainment in art and biology are very good.
- Students' achievement is at least satisfactory in all subjects.

What could be improved

- Systems and procedures for assessment and monitoring academic progress are unsatisfactory, particularly for those studying subjects at other schools in the consortium.
- Curriculum provision is too narrow; there are insufficient opportunities for careers and work related learning, religious education and personal development.
- There is insufficient access to the Internet and use of ICT to support students' learning.
- Procedures for monitoring students' presence on the school site are weak.
- The accommodation is not conducive to independent study.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Results are generally in line with national averages. Teaching is good and students' progress is very well monitored.
Chemistry	Satisfactory. Results have been in line with national averages. Standards of present students are above average. Teaching is always at least satisfactory, although the methodology can lack variety.
Business Studies	Satisfactory. Results are in line with national averages and relationships are positive. Teaching is satisfactory; at its best it is lively and interactive, capturing students' interest.
Information Technology	Satisfactory. Results are below national averages, but improving. Teaching is satisfactory and students' attitudes are very good.
Sports Studies	Satisfactory. Results have been below national averages; in line with students' prior attainment. Standards seen are in line with national averages. All teaching is at least satisfactory and some is good.
Art	Very good. Standards are very high. Very good teaching leads to good learning of technical skills. Good range of courses, media and enrichment provides well for all students.
History	Satisfactory. Results at A level have been below national averages, but the attainment of students currently taking the course are in line with what is seen nationally. Teaching is good and students experience a wide range of activities, which promote good learning.
English	Satisfactory. Results are below national averages, in line with students' prior attainment. Achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory. Students have a good range of activities and written assignments to promote their progress.
German	Satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good. Results are in line with national averages and achievement is satisfactory. There is insufficient co-ordination across the consortium.

In all other subjects that were sampled, teaching was always at least satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. Very good teaching was seen in biology and music.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Advice, guidance and support are satisfactory. Teachers know students well. The policy of registering students only in lessons limits the opportunity for tutors to fulfil their monitoring role. There is a clear assessment policy, not yet fully implemented.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Good. A new director of sixth form has been in post since September and has introduced a number of changes. The development plan identifies most of the areas for development cited above.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The choice of courses on offer, suiting their talents and aspirations. • The quality of the teaching they receive and the degree of challenge. • The accessibility of teachers to help and support their study. • The help they are given in learning to study independently. • The way that they are treated as responsible young adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost two fifths would like a wider range of enrichment and activities beyond their examination courses. • A similar proportion would like more advice about future options. • Almost one quarter would like their work more thoroughly assessed. • One fifth would like more information about their progress.

The inspectors found that the strengths identified by the students are well founded. The curriculum on offer to the students places an emphasis on A-level examination courses; there is a range of extra-curricular activities which students can opt into, although not all students take part in them as many have part time jobs. The school has recently introduced a new assessment policy, which has not yet had time to take full effect; when fully implemented, this should address students' concerns about assessment and feedback. Careers advice and information on higher education are good, but not for other options beyond the sixth form.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement "outstanding" in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to "very weak".

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils enter the school with wide variations in their standards of attainment. The proportion of high-attaining pupils joining the school is typical of a comprehensive school. Over the last few years the school is taking in more children with complex behavioural and learning difficulties. The average attainment on entry is in line with national averages in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In many other subjects, art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education, their attainment is in line with national expectations for pupils of their age.
2. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2001, the proportion of pupils who achieved either the national standard of Level 5 or the higher standard of Level 6 or above was well above the national average in English and above the national averages in mathematics and science. Standards, as measured by the school's average points score, over the 1997-2001 period have risen above the rate of schools nationally. When comparisons are made with similar schools, as measured by the level of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, attainment is well above that of similar schools and in the English and mathematics tests the proportion achieving Level 6 is very high and amongst the top five per cent of similar schools.
3. In the other subjects formally assessed at the end of Year 9 in 2001, teachers judged the overall attainment of pupils as broadly in line with national expectations in design and technology and geography, but below expectations in history, ICT and modern foreign languages. Inspectors consider that the overall level of attainment is in line with national expectations in all subjects except design and technology and ICT, where the standards are below expectations, largely because of insufficient opportunities across the full range of the National Curriculum.
4. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) passes, or General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) equivalent, at grades A* - C in 2001 was close to the national average. Based on the average total GCSE/GNVQ points score per pupil in the examination cohort, results in 2001 and over the last three years were also in line with the national average, although the school's improvement trend over a five-year period is below the national trend. In GCSE in 2001, results were above the national average in English and mathematics and in line with the national average in science. An analysis of the results shows a relatively consistent pattern of success across all subjects, although results in business studies, double award science, design and technology and English literature were not as high as other subjects in 2001, while results in sports studies were above those in other subjects.
5. In the work seen in Key Stage 4 during the inspection the overall standards of pupils' attainment in the core subjects of English and mathematics are in line with those of pupils of a similar age nationally while attainment in science is above that of other pupils of this age. In other subjects pupils are working at national levels in art, design and technology, German and music, while performance is below in drama, ICT and religious education. Attainment is above national expectations in geography, history and physical education.
6. As pupils move through the school from Year 7 to Year 9, the statistical evidence from the national tests shows that they make good progress. On the evidence of pupils' work and lessons seen during the inspection, pupils currently in Year 9 are not working at the high level suggested by the 2001 test results but that their progress is generally good although it is unsatisfactory in design and technology. Pupils generally achieve levels of competence across the curriculum to tackle the course requirements of GCSE and GNVQ.
7. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress over Years 10 and 11. When compared with similar schools, as measured by entitlement to free school meals, the proportion of pupils

attaining grades A* to C is above average; in relation to their prior attainment, pupils generally make progress close to the average for similar schools. The school uses a commercial package to measure the value-added from Key Stage 3 and this shows that pupils achieve higher levels than might be expected in all subjects other than business studies, music and the single science option. Performance is particularly good in the single sciences, economics, physical education and Urdu.

8. Teachers in the learning support department know the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs well and this contributes to the ethos of care and support. As a result of this, in withdrawal lessons, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their needs as outlined in their individual education plans. In Years 7 to 11 they make good progress in the humanities, physical education and in English, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Pupils do well in the GCSE examinations in terms of A* to G grade passes. The learning support department, however, lacks detailed analysis over time of individual subjects to show this.
9. Most pupils with English as an additional language demonstrate that they have acquired sufficient English language skills to function well and take part well in lessons with their peers. Their achievement is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and is good in Key Stage 4.
10. The school has a range of approaches to developing pupils' literacy skills. Some subjects, such as science, art, geography and history have formalised the contribution that they can make, but this is not consistent across other subjects. Standards of literacy are in line with those found nationally, with speaking, listening and reading skills a little better than writing skills. Pupils speak confidently and clearly. They have many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, for example, in analysing their own work, and that of other artists in art and in the explanation of their understanding in mathematics. There are few opportunities to speak in an extended format and much of the listening is in response to teachers' questioning. Pupils read competently and find information from their text, identifying key points. Pupils' written work is not always neat and well presented, but is reasonably accurate and specialist terminology is used appropriately. Key words are displayed in a number of classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to write for different audiences and purposes. In some subjects, for example, science, mathematics, religious education, history and geography, writing frames are used to support pupils' writing.
11. Mathematics and science have their own numeracy policies to inform teaching within these subjects. A numeracy co-ordinator is preparing a draft numeracy policy for consultation across the school, prior to a whole school training day on numeracy. However, pupils are required to exercise their numerical and other mathematical skills across a number of subjects. Where this occurs they demonstrate sound knowledge and good application of their skills to deal with the requirements of the subjects they study. There is limited departmental access to computers and, therefore, the use of ICT is not well developed in subjects.

Sixth form

12. Standards in A-level examinations in 2001 were in line with national averages for boys. Overall, standards have been steadily improving over the last three years from well below national averages. In many subjects, numbers are so small that comparisons with national data are inappropriate. Strong subjects over recent years have been art and biology. In art in 2001 every student attained the highest grade possible placing the school in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. Results in 2001 in sociology and English language are also well above national averages, while results in English literature are below average and well below average in history, design and technology and sports studies.
13. The work observed in A-level groups and in students' folders is generally of a higher standard than the previous year's results indicate, especially in Year 13. Standards of work seen are particularly high in art, chemistry and mathematics in both Years 12 and 13. For example, Year 12 chemistry students show a good grasp of rate constants and Arrhenius's equation, work more normally covered in Year 13. Students following the statistics module in mathematics also have an advanced understanding and can apply binomial, Poisson and normal analyses of distribution and

compare results. Those students studying further mathematics can solve first order differential equations. Standards in most subjects are in line with course requirements. The school uses a commercial value-added programme. This demonstrates that progress is always satisfactory and sometimes good; students do at least as well as would be expected, taking into account their prior attainment at GCSE and they do significantly better in art and ICT. Inspection evidence finds that achievement is also good in history.

14. There are very few students following vocational courses. Numbers are too small to make valid national comparisons. In 2001 a significant number of intermediate students did not achieve a qualification at the end of their courses. Current students on advanced courses are making good progress; for example, in business studies they have a good understanding of how companies function and the importance of good communication systems. Intermediate students were all on work experience during the week of the inspection and no work was sampled.
15. The small number of sixth formers who have special educational needs make good progress with appropriate support. For example, students with writing difficulties use laptop computers and are supplied with information sheets and proformae to avoid unnecessary writing. They are able to complete all the work set to the required standard because they receive appropriate support.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school and, as in the last inspection, their attitudes to learning are good. In almost three in ten lessons their attitudes are very good or excellent. For example, pupils responded keenly and were engaged in their learning in a Year 9 personal and social education lesson about drugs. These good attitudes enable them to make good progress in lessons and benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular activities. However, in about one lesson in 15 pupils' attitudes are less than satisfactory. In these lessons pupils do not come prepared to work and waste time through silly and immature behaviour.
17. Behaviour is also similar to the last report. It is satisfactory throughout the school and often good or very good in lessons; for example, pupils sat patiently through an assembly which failed to grab their interest. However, the number of pupils in the school who have complex emotional and behavioural problems is increasing and the school has taken a robust response when behaviour disrupts the learning of others. There was one permanent exclusion in the last school year and over 50 fixed-term exclusions. The school is currently trying 'internal exclusion' where pupils who have misbehaved in lessons work away from their normal classroom, supervised by members of the senior management team. This involved a handful of pupils, daily, during the inspection and is making a valuable contribution to ensuring good learning conditions for all pupils. Pupils are often boisterous when unsupervised in corridors but respond positively and rapidly to adult intervention. They are courteous to visitors, standing when a visitor enters the room and going out of their way to open doors. There is some carelessness about litter, dropped by pupils in the playground and canteen, at breaks, resulting in time spent clearing up by premises and catering staff.
18. There is very good racial harmony throughout the school and pupils' relationships with teachers and each other are very good. Pupils respond with confidence to the many opportunities to display responsibility, such as working as library assistants, helping in the canteen or as 'duty boy' in reception.
19. Pupils with special educational needs respond very well to the help and support they receive and are keen to make progress and do well. In withdrawal lessons their attitudes and behaviour are very positive on the whole. Where they receive extra support from learning support assistants in lessons this is accepted by other pupils and they themselves often ask for help. Pupils are confident to discuss their difficulties in front of others. Those Year 10 pupils with statements of special educational needs are appreciative of the extra help and support they have received since joining the school.
20. On the whole, pupils with English as an additional language respond eagerly as they gain confidence and feel secure. They collaborate well with each other as a diverse multi-cultural and

multi-lingual group and are happy to share their experiences and learning with each other. Some who have been in the school for some time help their peers by translating or interpreting for them.

21. Attendance has improved since the last inspection report and is now above the national average, although there is some variation across the school in common with many other schools, with lower levels in Key Stage 4. Unauthorised absence is in line with the national average. The school encourages pupils to arrive well before the start of lessons with a bell rung five minutes before the registration period, thus any lateness is largely within that time. Some lateness to afternoon registration, rather than lessons, occurs principally because some pupils are served their lunch late.

Sixth form

22. Attitudes and behaviour in the sixth form are generally good. Around half the sixth-form students completed the students' questionnaire and their views were generally very appreciative of the opportunities offered by the school.
23. Relationships are very good. The attitudes of students in lessons are often very good; for example, in a Year 12 geography lesson very good relationships had been established between students and between students and their teacher, which enabled students to try out ideas, relating information learned in other subjects. Visiting female sixth formers report that they are aware of a difference in ethos from their own single-sex school but generally find the boys easy to get along with. Students provide good role models for pupils further down the school through their efforts across a variety of whole school activities, including sport and mentoring. Sixth form students work one to one with Year 7 pupils in the learning support room and assist on school visits, such as a lower school geography visit to London.
24. There are no statistics to judge sixth form attendance. Students register and attend assembly only on the days that they have lessons in school. This is, nevertheless, an improvement on the last report where there was no requirement to record students' arrival or departure. Consideration is being given to a more rigorous system for recording attendance from September. During the inspection, there was rarely more than one student absent from lessons, although occasionally some were a few minutes late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

25. In the main part of the school the quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons. It is good or better in 55 per cent of lessons, a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Improvement has been very good because the priorities of the school development plan have been well implemented in nearly all the departmental development plans. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is much reduced and the proportion of very good teaching much increased since the last inspection. Good teaching is a feature of the English, mathematics, science, geography, history, physical education and religious education departments and in music teaching is very good.
26. One of the main characteristics of the good and very good teaching is the teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Teachers are also very clear when describing the learning objectives of lessons, so that pupils are in no doubt as to what they have to study and the part they have to play in the learning. Many teachers are also skilled at providing work for pupils of different levels of attainment. Teachers plan well in most subjects to relate learning to situations which pupils understand. For example, in history, reference was made to the events of 11th September and its effect on stocks and share prices, as seen in newspaper cuttings, as an introduction to pupils' study of the 'Wall Street Crash'. Pupils were able to learn about cause and effect in a relevant context. These qualities are underpinned by strong, positive relationships between boys and teachers. Lessons are conducted at a good pace, with teachers varying activities appropriately to ensure that boys remain interested and focused on their work. For the most part, homework is used well to reinforce learning and to extend knowledge, but not all teachers set it consistently.

27. The main weakness in teaching is a result of the limited use of information and communication technology in all subjects, especially in mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and history. Sometimes, class management is not consistently good and where it is weak, learning suffers. This is especially true when teachers do not apply the positive behaviour methods that are used successfully elsewhere. Considerable time is wasted waiting for boys to settle.
28. Most teachers have high expectations and progress and achievement are good in lessons when these are communicated effectively to students. For example, in most mathematics lessons the challenge and pace in oral and mental work lead to students making rapid progress. There was also a high level of challenge in a Year 8 geography lesson where boys were able to explain the causes of plate movement and describe the associated processes. The best teaching in art and drama is characterised by lessons that include critical evaluation of the boys' own work.
29. Teaching in most English lessons is good. Teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of their subject and effective management and organisation of pupils enable them to set clear objectives for lessons and to encourage and support pupils' learning well. Written work is marked regularly but does not always provide sufficient information for pupils to show them how their work could be improved.
30. The quality of the teaching in mathematics is generally good. In Key Stage 3 teachers are applying the strategies recommended by the National Numeracy Strategy, particularly in planning and teaching a three-part lesson. In several lessons, teachers make it clear at the beginning what is going to be learnt and, in the best lessons, return to this at the end for a plenary session of a few minutes in which pupils' understanding from the lesson is consolidated.
31. Science teaching is generally good. In these lessons, active learning takes place and boys respond well to these activities, behave maturely, concentrate well and contribute well to class discussion. There is a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, mainly due to pupils' immature and poor behaviour that is not dealt with well by the teacher.
32. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and guidance, mainly in one-to-one support and small group withdrawal lessons to address their needs. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. The learning atmosphere is calm and encouraging and pupils make good progress towards the targets they have been set. As a result of this, pupils are diligent in their approach to learning. In one withdrawal lesson, for example, a pupil was given effective support from one teacher to develop his knowledge and understanding of drugs whilst another teacher worked with another pupil to develop his communication and language skills. In another withdrawal lesson, one teacher provided a structured variety of activities for two Year 8 pupils to consolidate and develop their literacy skills whilst the other teacher effectively supported a Year 7 pupil with a focus on behaviour and concentration.
33. The school employs only two learning support assistants, so few lessons were observed with them working in a whole class. In geography and mathematics, the quality of this support was good. In lessons where there is no additional support, teachers generally plan their work effectively to meet the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and have a good understanding of pupils' individual education plans. In humanities lessons, for example, teachers are well aware of pupils' needs and plan their work accordingly. In English lessons, resources and materials used are matched to the range of pupils.
34. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is relevant to their needs. In lessons specialist support is satisfactory when it is provided, but it is not consistent across the school and departments. Subject teachers and staff with special responsibility for this group of pupils enable them to access the curriculum by a variety of teaching strategies, including the use of peer or buddy help. All work is firmly placed within the National Curriculum. Boys develop their speaking and listening skills well and become confident in reading and in recording information in note form. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, after reading *Romeo and Juliet* and watching the *Zefirelli* film

version, pupils in the early stages of learning English discussed in their groups how to defend a character, with the assistance of their support teacher, and made good gains in their understanding of the lesson.

35. The overall quality of boys' learning is satisfactory and it is good in most lessons in Key Stage 4. Boys have good opportunities to develop their speaking, listening, writing and reading skills, especially in history and English. They learn how to study independently and in groups, especially in geography and religious education. Opportunities for boys to learn about the application of ICT are limited and computers are not used well to enhance pupils' learning in all subjects.

Sixth form

36. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons and good or better in 61 per cent. Good teaching is distributed across all subjects and there is some very good teaching in art, history, mathematics, German, biology and business studies. Specific details of those subjects inspected are reported fully in section E.
37. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' work critically, for example, in art. When this happens students do so very effectively and learn a great deal from the process. In a business studies lesson, the teacher prepared very high quality overhead transparencies and this generated an excellent discussion. In a biology lesson, the lesson was very well structured to help students make notes by translating information from one form to another. Very good diagrams, well chosen written resources and an excellent computer simulation made this a very effective lesson.
38. Teachers' very good knowledge of their own subject and the requirements of the examinations are strong features of all lessons. Students are very well prepared for module tests and end of course examinations. In addition, the quality of relationships between students and staff, and the co-operation shown by students in supporting each other, are also very good.
39. Teachers are very accessible and provide good advice and support while developing students' independent learning skills. Both these features are highly valued by students; of those who returned the questionnaire, over nine out of ten responded positively to these statements. A geography lesson and a German lesson were both effective because of the independent work students had completed before the lesson. However, in other subjects such as English, students are not sufficiently well supported in developing as independent learners.
40. Teaching of key skills is via a drop-in session on one afternoon each week. While this is satisfactory for the few students who avail themselves of this opportunity, key skills are not built into all subjects well, so that students' learning is patchy. This is particularly true for their use of information technology as a tool to support learning in a number of subjects such as sports studies and art.
41. Where teaching is less good, sometimes the pace is too slow, the chosen tasks are inappropriate or the lesson is over-directed by the teacher, with insufficient focus on students' ideas and activity. At present there are few opportunities for teachers to observe other lessons throughout the consortium as a means of developing a more consistent approach across all aspects of the same subject, for example, in German.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

42. At Key Stage 3 the school meets the statutory curriculum requirements and provides equality of access to a broad and balanced education for all its pupils. In addition to the National Curriculum subjects the curriculum is broadened by the addition of one period a week of personal, social and health education, religious education, ICT and drama. The school has extended the opportunities

in modern foreign languages since the previous inspection and now offers either French or German to pupils on entry and throughout the key stage. Mathematics is taught in setted groups from Year 7, French and German from Year 8 and science from Year 9. All other subjects are taught in mixed ability groups. Smaller teaching groups are formed for design and technology, ICT, art, drama and music. These arrangements work well and together with the provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language they provide well for the aptitudes and needs of all groups of pupils. The school has not yet fully implemented the national Key Stage 3 strategy in English and numeracy but elements of good practice are successfully incorporated within the teaching of these subjects.

43. In Key Stage 4 all pupils study English, mathematics, science, physical education, design and technology, ICT and personal, social and health education. The large majority study a modern foreign language, currently German, although around 20 pupils in each year are disapplied from the modern foreign languages requirement to enable them to follow a vocational education course. In science, most pupils study double science but there are opportunities for pupils to choose three separate sciences or just one, depending on their attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. All pupils then have the option of two additional subjects selected from an appropriate range including the arts, humanities, economics, business studies, media studies and sports studies. These arrangements provide for the interests and aptitudes of the majority of pupils. Curriculum provision is enhanced further through the school's gifted and talented programme. This initiative is at an early stage but already a number of departments have improved their curriculum materials and learning programmes for higher ability pupils.
44. The vocational education course is a well-designed skills based programme, with work shadowing, mini enterprise and community work, giving a breadth of experience and alternative accreditation for those pupils for whom the GCSE examination may not be suitable. Otherwise, subjects are certificated by GCSE with the exception of information and communication technology, in which pupils may gain a basic Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) qualification or may, with the addition of their own study beyond the classroom, gain a Part 1 GNVQ qualification. The range of options within design and technology is restricted to graphical communication and resistant materials and the school has yet to develop vocational subjects at Key Stage 4 that are suitable for the full range of interests and abilities. Plans are in hand to address these issues to some extent by offering a vocational GCSE in food technology, in co-operation with a neighbouring school.
45. Some study of religious education is currently incorporated into personal, social and health education lessons. However, this arrangement does not enable the agreed syllabus at Key Stage 4 to be completed and so does not meet statutory requirements.
46. Overall, curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The learning support department works hard to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. There is in-class support in mainstream lessons, as well as withdrawal sessions for pupils identified at the varying levels within the Code of Practice for special educational needs and with statements of special educational needs. This means that this group of pupils is enabled to access the full curriculum on offer. In addition to the alternative provision made for those pupils who are disapplied from modern foreign languages in the National Curriculum, an option support group is also available for older pupils who find difficulty in taking the full range of GCSE courses; pupils can gain accreditation in the Youth Award Scheme course as a result of this. The learning support department also enters older pupils for the Certificate of Achievement course in English. Where appropriate, the learning support department organises special arrangements in examinations to help support those pupils with special educational needs.
47. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. Pupils' needs are assessed when they enter the school. Specialist support is concentrated on those pupils who are at an early stage of English language acquisition and have the greatest need. Some pupils at more advanced levels of language acquisition do not receive additional support, which sometimes slows their learning while they develop the subject specific language. Regular assessments are made to ascertain pupils' progress and to identify any areas of particular concern. Most of those

boys who attend optional support classes, taught by the specialist for English as an additional language, improve their learning to access the curriculum better and to catch up with homework, class or coursework, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Those pupils who also have special educational needs are supported mainly through the learning support department, with whom the English as an additional language department maintains a close contact.

48. Since the 1996 inspection, the number of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English has increased. Subject teachers, on the whole, have good strategies for meeting the general needs of pupils who are at early stages of learning English. The specialist support provided is particularly valued by colleagues who teach English and history. However, joint planning with subject teachers across the school is informal and is not consistent so that there are insufficient high quality, culturally relevant aids and other learning resources to help extend pupils' learning and reinforce their self esteem.
49. Whilst the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, that for their moral, social and cultural development is good. This aspect of education is provided through lessons in personal, social and health education, within other subjects and through assemblies and extra-curricular activities.
50. The course in personal, social and health education covers a broad range of appropriate topics, including the piloting of some recommended elements of citizenship prior to statutory introduction in September 2002. Most of the teaching is satisfactory and some good, although some teachers lack expertise in the most appropriate methods for the course. The provision is enhanced by involvement in local initiatives such as the Hounslow Healthy Schools Programme and by a number of visitors, including talks by the local community police and a drugs presentation by a theatre education group, which add relevance and interest for the boys. In Key Stage 4, the programme is further enhanced by work experience and a mini-enterprise scheme. The West London Careers Service provides useful inputs to lessons, especially in the "Way Ahead Programme", giving guidance on future educational and career routes from Year 9.
51. All departments have produced statements about the contribution they make to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils. A wide range of moral and social issues is discussed in history, geography and religious education. These include the impact of religion on Roman Life, issues arising out of the growth of the British Empire, the Holocaust and slavery. The implications of conflict are reflected on in the study of the Second World War, the Vietnam War and the Cold War. In geography pupils may wonder at the power of the natural world, as they did in a visit to the Kobe earthquake experience at the Natural History Museum. In religious education they search for meaning and the purpose of life, ponder the existence of God and ways in which humanity is unique. Pupils study the rights and wrongs of global development issues, aid and famine. However, opportunities for further reflection that exist within the curriculum are not always taken, as for example in English when a poem on slavery was analysed only for its metre, missing the opportunity for the development of the moral and social implications.
52. School assemblies do not meet statutory requirements and provide little stimulus for spiritual development or time for reflection on moral questions; often these occasions are used only for the sharing of information.
53. The school provides a number of opportunities for boys to exercise responsibility as form and school councillors, librarians, sports captains and form captains. The head boy and deputies, and the daily duty boy take responsibility for a number of tasks across the school. Boys have good opportunities to work in real situations, such as the school shop, on the till in the canteen, as reprographic assistants and as caretaking assistants. Pupils have been involved in senior staff appointments. In lessons they are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, to co-operate in pairs and groups. In lessons where they are asked to make presentations they are encouraged to take turns listening to each other. The school's expectations of behaviour were developed in association with pupils and are prominently displayed in classrooms.

54. The school brochure makes a strong statement about equal opportunities and social inclusion and this is reflected in the opportunities that exist for pupils to study their own and other cultures. In religious education pupils study the growth of cultures, their religion, art, literature and music. There are a number of vibrant multi-cultural displays in the school. Other displays of pupils' work, including art in corridors and subject work in classrooms, encourage respect and give an incentive to achieve. The learning support department's ethos of inclusion and support for those pupils with special educational needs has a positive impact on the social development and learning experience of these pupils as well as that of all other pupils in the school.
55. Extra-curricular provision, identified as a considerable strength in the last report, remains very strong. There is an impressive range of sporting and other activities on offer in the form of visits, outings, residential trips and clubs, including chess, engineering challenges and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme for pupils to develop socially and culturally. In sport there are recreational and inter-school competitive fixtures and there is a very high level of pupil involvement in these activities. School teams continue to gain considerable success and a number of individuals have achieved representative honours at borough, county and national levels in athletics, cross-country, basketball, cricket, football and rugby, including as county and regional cricket and rugby team captains. There has also been success at European and world junior athletics championship level. Large numbers take part in an annual production, involving girls from a neighbouring school; parents report that performances are of a high standard. In music a school band meets regularly, though only a few pupils are involved and a choir is formed for concert events. The number of boys taking instrumental lessons is below the national average and overall there is a relatively low level of musical extra-curricular activity. Many departments arrange appropriate visits to places of interest both locally and abroad. The provision made by the school has taken account of the differing interests of boys of different ages and there is a broad range of after school clubs for those with interests in activities such as mathematics, chess and history. Extra-curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs outside normal curriculum time is available at lunchtimes and after school. Pupils are given additional support and guidance they feel they might need. Pupils with English as an additional language take a full part in the activities the school provides and withdrawal is kept to the minimum.
56. The school has developed strong links with partners in the community to provide enriched learning opportunities for pupils. An annual Industry Day for Year 9 pupils gives many valuable opportunities to go off-site to experience a wide range of occupations and locations, including Covent Garden, the army, a local rugby club, the police, and the fire service at Heathrow Airport. Other groups work at school with representatives from more local businesses and services. Industry links are developed in close association with the Hounslow Education Business Partnership and a number of useful learning resource packs have been developed with local industries. The close links with B Sky B have supported the school's current bid for specialist sports college status, a team building day, the Reach for the Sky programme and mentoring by senior executives and work placements.

Sixth form

57. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. The school offers a wide range of more than 20 AS and A2-level courses, a number of these at other schools within a consortium of four schools which run a common, blocked post-16 timetable. This greatly increases the choices available while remaining cost-effective. The choice of vocational options within the consortium is very limited but appropriate; these are provided at a local college of further education.
58. Almost all students follow advanced level courses; less than ten per cent study any vocational option. The range of examination courses matches the aspirations and talents of those who choose to remain in the sixth form very well. This aspect of sixth form provision was rated very highly by students. Provision is responsive to local circumstances, avoiding duplication of courses offered by local colleges of further education and making good use of the links with other schools through the consortium to offer a wide range of courses at advanced level.

59. Key skills drop-in sessions are timetabled on one afternoon each week. However, a number of examination classes are timetabled at the same time, so that not all students can attend and the numbers choosing to go are very small indeed. There are no other timetabled sessions for students other than their examination courses. In the students' questionnaire, almost two fifths of those returning the questionnaire would like to see more enrichment activities.
60. A programme of speakers and events provides personal, social and religious education. These sessions take place every half term, but by themselves are insufficient to secure personal and social development and do not conform to the agreed syllabus for religious education.
61. Students are given a range of opportunities to take responsibility. There is an elected head boy and deputy head boy, and a sixth form committee. Students mentor lower school pupils and assist with, for example, paired reading. They also help with some extra-curricular activities. They have the option of Duke of Edinburgh's award, Young Enterprise, Fulcrum challenge and a range of trips and visits such as theatre visits and Oxford Access. There are also a number of fund-raising and social activities; the latter are particularly important at the start of the sixth form as part of induction into the consortium.
62. Work experience is offered to those on vocational courses but not to others, and careers education is limited to advice and guidance on application to universities. Although the school has good links with a number of businesses, these are not fully used to support the curriculum. The school makes very good use of local universities to raise students' aspirations and enhance many subjects. Links with other providers of post-16 education are also very good, particularly through the consortium.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

63. The school continues to have an efficient pastoral system through form tutors and heads of year, as reported at the time of the last inspection. This, together with the input from learning and study support staff and mentors, provides a very good foundation for pupils' personal development.
64. There are good procedures in place to monitor and analyse attendance and punctuality, assisted by the school's full-time attendance officer who works closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator, learning mentors and the borough's educational welfare officer. This has resulted in gradually improving attendance that is now above the national average. The school quotes a number of instances where poor attenders were targeted and have now been successfully re-integrated into school, initially with reduced timetables.
65. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating unacceptable behaviour are also good. They were developed in consultation with pupils and parents; pupils have contributed to the preparation of classroom expectations, now displayed prominently around the school, and they respond well to the use of assertive discipline techniques covered in recent staff in-service training. School meals' supervisors have also been taught basic techniques for managing the behaviour of pupils. However, there is not yet a consistent approach to behaviour management by all teachers and productive time is lost in a few lessons waiting for pupils to settle.
66. Parents expressed some concerns about possible bullying in school. Pupils interviewed feel safe at school but younger ones refer to an amount of jostling by older pupils in corridors. There is a clearly understood process for handling bullying incidents which was seen to operate effectively during the week of inspection. There is a system for monitoring racial incidents but these are a rarity in school.
67. Procedures for child protection are sound. There is good awareness of the issues but some confusion about the named person for child protection and a lack of formal training for the wider group involved in pastoral care. Although many health and safety procedures are in place, such as regular fire practices, recording of accidents and a recent inspection by the borough health and

safety team, a number of health and safety issues remain to be tackled, such as trip hazards around the school and more fully documented risk assessments.

68. The learning support department has effective relationships with outside specialist agencies to enhance further the quality of support for those pupils with special educational needs. Transitional and annual reviews are effective and support those pupils with statements of special educational needs as they move through the school. The school meets the curricular requirements as outlined in the great majority of pupils' statements of special educational needs well. The special educational needs co-ordinator has recently supported the pastoral system by compiling useful individual education plans in respect of behaviour.
69. At the time of the inspection, the school had recently introduced a revised assessment policy. The new procedures enable the school to assess and track the progress of every individual effectively. Attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 is collated upon entry and combined with the results of common tests in Years 7 and 10. The process is efficient, generating reliable data that forms the basis for reporting, target setting and predicting results in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 and GCSE results at the end of Year 11.
70. The school is beginning to analyse the examination performance of different groups of pupils. Assessment data is distributed to teaching staff, but is not yet used effectively. For example, the whole school analysis of boys' results is not consistently followed up in faculty areas to check to what extent the results reflect national differences, nor is the impact of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and curriculum planning related to final results. School policy on assessment has been very general, allowing subjects to develop their own systems. Some individual systems are good, for example, in science and religious education, where there is on-going assessment that enables targets to be set for individual pupils and informs curriculum planning. In English, history, geography and information and communication technology, for example, regular assessment is used to track pupils' progress, but there is little analysis of data to develop planning adequately. The majority of teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide information on levels of attainment. However, the effectiveness of school assessment procedures relies upon the quality of the assessments carried out by individual departments. Whilst all subjects have assessment procedures in place, the quality is inconsistent. There is, overall, insufficient analysis of assessment data within the subject areas.
71. The learning support department draws upon a range of assessment data in order to identify pupils who have special educational needs and who need support. They are then placed appropriately on the school's register of special educational needs in line with the requirements of the new Code of Practice introduced in January 2002. The use of data is appropriate and enables the learning support department to track the progress of these pupils over their time in school. The use of information technology to help in the collation of this record keeping is not well developed. Overall, assessment procedures within this area are good.
72. Statements of special educational needs are reviewed annually and the review draws upon a wide range of professional opinion and consultation with parents or carers and pupils. This allows the updating of pupils' records on a regular basis. Assessment data over time is included in pupils' records and these enable the progress of pupils with statements to be tracked as they move through the school. Individual education plans are in place for pupils as required by the Code of Practice. However, the quality of target setting in these plans lacks consistency across the years. Targets are not always clear, concise, challenging and attainable and in some instances are basically strategies for teachers. Individual plans are reviewed on a regular basis and targets are subsequently modified.

Sixth form

Assessment

73. There is a clear assessment policy, which has recently been introduced, setting out expectations of marking and reporting. This policy has not yet been fully implemented and there is considerable

variation in the quantity and quality of assessments in different subjects. The results of the student questionnaire indicate that almost one quarter of students feel that their work is not thoroughly assessed and a slightly smaller proportion feels that they are not sufficiently informed about their progress. In some subjects, such as mathematics, monitoring of students' progress is strong. However, this is not consistent across all subjects in the sixth form.

74. There are full and detailed annual reports to parents, with attainment targets for improvement and teachers' comments. These are supplemented by termly progress checks. Different systems in the four schools in the consortium make monitoring progress difficult and at present this is unsatisfactory. Tutors maintain an overview and meet with students after the termly checks. However, tutors do not meet students regularly so that, although their job description includes responsibility for monitoring, in practice at present it is inadequate.
75. Across the sixth form and in most subjects inspected, insufficient use is made of the data available within the school for induction and target setting at the start of the course, monitoring students' progress throughout the course and judging the extent of their achievement at the end of the programme.

Advice, support and guidance

76. Some students criticised the level of help and guidance available from the school. Provision is adequate. Teachers know their students well and any with particular difficulties are likely to receive appropriate help. The drop-in counselling service provides valuable support within the school. A useful, written, weekly briefing for sixth formers draws attention to relevant dates and activities to assist studies. Specific sessions are set up for careers guidance including selection of universities but there is no weekly timetabled provision for learning life skills. Written progress reports are provided for students and their parents, including space for students' own comments.
77. Provision to ensure students' health and safety is sound.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

78. Parents and carers have a generally high opinion of the school. Information for parents has improved since the last inspection and is now good, including relevant curriculum meetings, such as choices of GCSE subjects in Year 9, a well-presented school brochure, a variety of newsletters and a very helpful parents' handbook provided for parents of new pupils when they first come to the school. At this meeting, the home-school contract is agreed, signed and filed, but it is not re-issued, as required, every year. The quality of information about individual pupils' progress has also improved since the last inspection. Pupils' reports now incorporate clear National Curriculum levels for pupils in Key Stage 3 and helpful targets at Key Stage 4. Sixth form reports are discussed in detail at annual review meetings.
79. Overall, parents make a good contribution to their children's learning at school and home. Although few parents returned questionnaires or attended the pre-inspection meeting, attendance at consultation meetings, such as annual reviews for pupils with special educational needs, is good and there is a supportive parent-teachers' association. In addition to making a valuable contribution to fund raising, enabling purchases such as the school minibus which benefit curricular and extra-curricular activities thus aiding pupils' learning, the association provides support for parents in the form of curriculum related meetings.
80. Signing of homework diaries and planners by pupils, parents and staff is inconsistent. There is also an apparent mismatch between the intended purpose of these documents; the school views them as a tool to enable pupils to organise themselves, whereas parents expect them to act as a means of communication between home and school.
81. Parents and carers are invited to and the majority attend the annual and transitional reviews of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Their views are recorded and this keeps them involved and informed about their children's progress towards the targets set out as part of the review. Parents and carers are also involved in the reviews of individual education plans through attendance at parents' evenings. Members of staff have good relations and liaise well with families who have boys with English as an additional language and give guidance and support to them about their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

82. At the time of the last inspection the leadership of the school was reported as effective. A new headteacher has been appointed since that time and has been in post for just over a year. His leadership is strong and is clearly focused on developments to secure improvements in educational standards and facilities, whilst maintaining the positive ethos in which all students are valued and enabled to achieve their potential. His vision is understood and valued by staff, pupils and their parents.
83. The leadership group works as a united team and has an active presence around the school to maintain high standards of behaviour. Management responsibilities within the team reflect individual strengths and members provide direct support for heads of faculty and departments

within a newly defined line management structure. Middle managers have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. A significant number have been appointed recently and are inexperienced so that the school's identified need for management training at this level is well founded.

84. The governing body is well established and strongly committed to the school's improvement and development. Governors understand their role in helping to give strategic direction to the school's work and in understanding its strengths and weaknesses. Generally it conducts its business well. However, it has not found a way to meet all its statutory responsibilities to comply with requirements for a daily act of collective worship or provide adequately for religious education, issues which were identified in the last inspection. The current provision for design and technology does not meet National Curriculum requirements fully.
85. The school's development planning processes are documented well and the present plan has appropriate priorities, addressing current national initiatives to improve standards. Action planning to achieve these is outline in nature but is generally successful in providing a framework for middle managers to develop their own plans. Implementation of the plan is monitored regularly and is successful in identifying necessary adjustments to meet the original planned objective. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the school development plan was identified as a key issue for improvement. The current focus on establishing clearer whole school systems and structures is being effectively implemented and an overall management information system is now in place to underpin and facilitate change. Key data are collected but have not until now been interpreted and shared in a way which has enabled all levels of management to evaluate its past and present effectiveness and plan future development securely. The senior team has a good awareness of existing weaknesses within the school and has plans in place to review overall performance more systematically through more formal school review mechanisms.
86. The school's financial management and planning support its educational priorities effectively and takes account of the principles of best value. The governing body is well informed about spending patterns and is closely involved in discussion of financial matters and in monitoring expenditure. A recent auditor's report confirms satisfactory financial systems operating in the school but highlights a number of areas for improvement. The governors' finance committee has discussed these recommendations but an action plan has not yet been established to address all the issues fully. The school has adopted a cautious approach to spending in recent years so that it has built up a significant contingency fund. There are clear plans to use these funds to improve accommodation and the overall quality of the school environment.
87. The school pays due regard to the Code of Practice for special educational needs and the register of special educational needs is effectively organised and up-to-date. The head of the learning support department is an experienced practitioner and is effectively co-ordinating whole school provision for special educational needs. Improvement planning and a useful department handbook guide the work of the learning support department well. Some useful advice and information for teachers to help them in their planning have also been provided. The school is being prepared well for the introduction of the new Code of Practice. The quality of teaching and learning from qualified teachers is good in individual and small group withdrawal lessons, but there is scope to provide for larger groups than at present or for further support within mainstream lessons in order to reach larger numbers of pupils with special educational needs. The use of information technology for record keeping and updating the school's register of special educational needs, as well as for general administrative and information purposes, is not yet well developed. There is no extra administrative support available for the learning support department. This means that the special educational needs co-ordinator and support teachers are completing many routine administrative tasks, which is an inefficient use of their time, experience and expertise. The school uses specific funding for special educational needs appropriately.
88. The co-ordination of support for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory within the available teaching and financial resources. The lack of bilingual support assistants reduces opportunities for more pupils to receive support in this crucial and growing area of need. Practice

should be improved further so that the needs of this group of pupils are understood more fully and supported by all staff.

89. The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting staff and currently has two vacancies covered by temporary teachers. Around half the teachers are new to the school within the last two years and many teachers are new to their posts of responsibility. Nevertheless, in general, there is a satisfactory match between staffing and the needs of the curriculum, with the vast majority of lessons taught by subject specialists. There is a good system of induction to the work of the school for teachers new to teaching and to the school. Opportunities for staff training are generally well used. The national system for the performance management of teaching staff is in place and is proceeding appropriately through its prescribed cycle. The school has very strong and effective links with the neighbouring university and is an effective provider of initial teacher training.
90. Work has been undertaken since the last inspection to improve accommodation, in particular the important maintenance work of plugging leaks from flat roofs and window replacement. A number of areas in the school have undergone significant refurbishment to improve the overall quality of the learning environment. This is being extended through a structured improvement programme. The premises team persevere in tackling an extensive list of jobs, added to by a recent health and safety survey. A number of rooms have frayed carpets, one office has capped off gas pipes projecting several inches from the middle of the floor and the mathematics hut is cold and draughty early in the morning, with gaps between wall and floor.
91. Most subjects have sufficient, suitable accommodation. The learning support department is housed in two dedicated rooms on the ground floor. These provide for a pleasant learning environment that is enhanced by good quality display, as well as computers and printers in both rooms. However, the condition of many areas within the school is still unsatisfactory. A number of classrooms are small for the numbers in the teaching groups. The huts used mainly for mathematics and design and technology are in a poor state of repair although internally they are pleasantly decorated. The furniture in design and technology and art rooms is old and does not enhance the learning environment. There are shortages of chairs in some rooms and several chairs in use are damaged. This is not conducive to effective learning.
92. Parents reported that younger pupils, in particular, avoid using the lavatory throughout the day because the facilities provided are unpleasant. The washrooms have running water but no soap, the urinals do not appear to flush correctly and an unpleasant smell permeates the corridor close to the canteen. Outside, the playground space, used heavily for practice in cricket, football or basketball, is very uneven with an uncapped drain that could lead to injury. These deficiencies have been identified in the school development plan and agreement has been reached to improve facilities in the coming school holiday.
93. In spite of the many deficiencies the whole school focus on improving internal decoration and resources is having a positive impact and raising pupils' levels of expectation of their learning environment. High-quality displays in many corridors and classrooms make a very good contribution to learning. They give encouragement to pupils to produce work worthy of display on the achievement board, which greets visitors in the entrance hall, and help to reinforce learning or understanding of school procedures, such as the display on what school marking means, in one corridor.
94. Learning resources are generally adequate. They are good for some subjects, such as English, history or physical education, but poor for music, where there is broken equipment in need of attention. Access to computers is unsatisfactory across all key subject areas and is limiting the use of ICT as a tool to improve learning.
95. The library provides a calm and attractive base for lessons, such as 'guided reading', and the 16 computer terminals are well used throughout the day for lessons or independent research by pupils. There is insufficient memory available to use the library's stock of CD ROM disks, although the school has plans to improve this situation. All pupils may borrow two fiction and two non-fiction books for two weeks at a time from the wide and relevant range of authors and topics

on display. However, given the very high percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language, there are no bilingual books and dictionaries in the library to enable pupils to learn independently, although there are some bilingual resources in the specialist room.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

96. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The newly appointed director of the sixth form is conscientious and thorough. At present he has no assistant and his workload is heavy. Tutors have clear job descriptions focusing on monitoring students' progress. However, this is difficult as there is no regular daily contact and travelling between consortium schools takes time from breaks and registrations.
97. The single aim of the sixth form is clear. The development plan is well linked to the school plan and cites most of the areas for development identified during the inspection. However, there are no success criteria linked to outcomes for students. The agenda is clearly identified and some action has already been taken to improve, for example, procedures for monitoring academic progress and attendance. However, monitoring arrangements are still not consistently effective and variations in achievement between different groups are not analysed sufficiently, nor used to underpin priorities in the development plan.
98. At present the sixth form is cost-effective, largely because of the consortium arrangements and the limiting of the curriculum to examination courses. Future developments are considered in the light of changing circumstances, such as the 14-19 green paper and changing financial arrangements from the Learning and Skills Council. The consortium plan for next year has just been finalised; financial considerations contribute to the decision-making. The sixth form will remain cost-effective if the expected numbers of students are recruited.
99. Performance management has been fully implemented. At present, observation of sixth form lessons is relatively rare and there is no system for monitoring the overall quality of provision across the consortium. This means that good practice is not widely shared and the quality of provision of the same subject in different centres is not monitored to ensure consistency.

Resources

100. At present there are teacher shortages in some subjects, notably physics. The school has made strenuous efforts to recruit teachers and in the meantime has made satisfactory arrangements to ensure that students' learning is not unduly affected. Some teachers, such as in ICT, lack experience. At present there are insufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to fully cover all the courses offered.
101. The accommodation for the sixth form is relatively limited. There is a common room, which is too small for the whole sixth form, and the remainder of classes, activities and private study are in the same rooms as the rest of the school. The environment is not conducive to independent study.
102. The overall provision of resources is satisfactory. However, sixth formers have insufficient access to ICT resources; most use the freedom the school allows to work at home. The provision of books is adequate for the demands of courses and students have their own textbooks to support their learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

103. In order to improve and build on the sound quality of education that pupils already receive, the governors and senior management of the school should:

- (1) **Improve attainment by implementing existing policies more consistently across all subjects and ensuring that:**
 - a) the policy for ICT is implemented in all subjects (paragraphs 11 and 168);
 - b) policies for literacy and numeracy are formalised and implemented (paragraphs 10, 11, 119 and 131);
 - c) assessment data is analysed and used to improve curriculum planning (paragraphs 70);
 - d) all teachers adopt the positive behaviour management strategies used effectively in some lessons (paragraphs 16 and 27).

- (2) **Meet statutory requirements by:**
 - a) ensuring that the teaching programmes for design and technology meet fully the requirements of the National Curriculum (paragraphs 84 and 152);
 - b) providing religious education for all pupils in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus (paragraphs 45, 60, 84 and 210);
 - c) providing a daily act of collective worship for every pupil (paragraphs 60 and 84).

- (3) **Improve the quality of the learning environment by:**
 - a) improving sub-standard accommodation in design and technology and mathematics (paragraphs 91 and 156);
 - b) implementing the planned refurbishment programme to improve toilet provision (paragraphs 86 and 92);
 - c) continuing the current whole school environment improvement programme (paragraphs 82 and 93).

Sixth form

- (1) **Improve systems of assessment and monitoring of academic progress by:**
 - a) consistently implementing the new assessment policy (paragraph 73);
 - b) making use of available data to provide a baseline of prior attainment, set outcome targets in all subjects and monitor and feedback progress against these targets (paragraph 75);
 - c) establishing a common system for monitoring academic progress and feeding back to students regardless of where they study and ensuring that tutors have sufficient time with students to monitor their progress adequately (paragraphs 74 and 96).

- (2) **Improve curriculum breadth beyond examination courses by:**
 - a) establishing expected outcomes related to the sixth form aim and in the light of the outcomes from the 14-19 green paper (paragraphs 97 and 98);
 - b) improving arrangements for work-related learning, careers education, key skills, religious education and personal development (paragraphs 58, 59 and 60);
 - c) using ICT within subjects to improve students' learning (paragraph 40).

- (3) **Develop procedures for monitoring the presence of students on the school site and in lessons by:**
 - a) implementing a system for recording and monitoring attendance on site (paragraph 24).

- (4) **Improve the accommodation for sixth form students in order to provide an environment more conducive to independent study by:**
 - a) reviewing the needs of sixth form students and establishing facilities appropriate to these needs (paragraph 101).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	163
	Sixth form	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		68

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	5	21	63	66	4	4	0
Percentage	3	13	39	40	2	2	0
Sixth form							
Number	1	6	18	15	1	0	0
Percentage	2	15	44	37	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	814	167
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	167	17

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	22	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	273	3

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	376

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.4
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	167	0	167

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	140	127	125
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	140	127	125
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	84 (74)	76 (74)	75 (66)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	53 (38)	55 (57)	40 (37)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	139	127	115
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	139	127	115
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	83 (71)	76 (77)	69 (64)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	49 (36)	56 (58)	34 (36)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	160	0	160

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	74	140	156
	Girls	0	0	1
	Total	74	140	157
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	46 (46)	88 (85)	98 (92)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	36.8 (36.4)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		n/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	66	3	69
	Average point score per candidate	13.8 (11.6)	12 (18)	13.7 (11.7)
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9 (17.1)	18 (18)	17.5 (17.6)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	65	2	67	1	1	2
	Average point score per candidate	13.7	12	13.7	18	12	15
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		n/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	29
Black – African heritage	30
Black – other	13
Indian	202
Pakistani	96
Bangladeshi	6
Chinese	12
White	467
Any other minority ethnic group	126

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	3	0
Pakistani	4	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	1	0
White	46	1
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	60.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.3

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	18.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	485

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	68.9
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.6
Key Stage 4	22.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	2964632
Total expenditure	2855189
Expenditure per pupil	2830
Balance brought forward from previous year	34886
Balance carried forward to next year	144329

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	33.4
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Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	33.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	981
Number of questionnaires returned	79

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	51	13	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	61	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	51	12	10	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	49	25	9	3
The teaching is good.	31	60	5	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	49	19	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	37	13	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	41	0	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	30	38	22	8	3
The school is well led and managed.	35	45	12	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	45	5	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	39	11	5	13

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

A very small proportion of parents attended the meeting held before the inspection and only eight per cent of parents returned the questionnaire. Inspectors' views largely support the aspects which please parents.

Other issues raised by parents

At the meeting some parents expressed the view that some younger boys feel intimidated around the school and on the fact that the lavatory provision is inadequate. Behaviour was found to be generally satisfactory. Corridors at break and change of lessons are noisy and younger pupils may well be

jostled by older ones. There was no evidence of this being intended harassment or pupils' failure to report incidents relating to fear of retribution.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **good**.

Strengths

- Attainment at the end of Year 9 is consistently above average for similar schools.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, manage pupils well and question pupils in a manner that is perceptive and involves all pupils.
- Relationships are good. Pupils work co-operatively and relate positively to their teachers.

Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to redraft and improve the quality and presentation of their written work.
- Schemes of work do not identify key skills nor take account of pupils' personal development.
- The analysis and use of assessment data does not inform curriculum planning sufficiently.

104. Standards of attainment within the school are generally above national averages. In the 2001 standard assessment tests at the end of Year 9, the percentage of pupils attaining level 5 and level 6 was well above the national averages for all schools. Over the past three years the improvement trend is higher than the national trend and in 2001 the attainment of pupils as measured by the average points scored was well above the national average for all schools and very high when compared with similar schools. In 2001, attainment was higher in English than in the other core subjects of mathematics and science, although it had been similar in previous years.
105. Pupils' attainment in English, English literature and media studies in the 2001 GCSE examinations was broadly in line with the national average for all pupils and slightly above the average for boys. Attainment has been consistent for the past three years and in line with the national trend. The percentage of pupils gaining grades A*-C in English in 2001 was 54 per cent compared with the national average for boys of 52 per cent. In English literature, the percentage gaining grades A*-C was 54 per cent compared to a national average for boys of 48 per cent. However, in comparison with other subjects within the school, attainment in the 2001 examinations was slightly below the school average.
106. Observation in lessons and a scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work confirm that attainment is above average in Years 7 to 9 and average in Years 10-11.
107. In Years 7 to 9, there is a good range of writing, showing increasing complexity and sophistication. By Year 9, pupils are using a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary to create effect. Writing is often sequential, ideas are organised in paragraphs, with appropriate punctuation and generally accurate spelling. The writing of higher attaining pupils is confident and secure, and there is good development in the use of language, both for effect and for the interest of the reader. Pupils write in a range of styles and forms, both fiction and non-fiction. They are able to express a personal response in their writing and across the key stage they demonstrate an increasing awareness of audience and purpose. Lower attaining pupils use simple language structures but are secure in basic skills. However, the quality of pupils' writing is variable and does not always reflect the overall standard of pupils' attainment.
108. Pupils read with fluency and meaning, and many read widely and independently. They are introduced to a variety of literary texts and develop some critical awareness of character, plot and structure. In Year 9 pupils can identify different layers of meaning and comment upon their significance. Higher attaining pupils are developing the higher order skills of analysis and

- synthesis. They speak clearly and can adapt their talk to the demands of different contexts with increasing confidence. Through the variety of their vocabulary and expression, they are able to interest the listener. In discussion, pupils listen carefully, make contributions and ask questions. They are responsive to the ideas of others, though not always with sufficient sensitivity.
109. By Year 11, pupils respond critically and sensitively to a range of texts. They show an understanding of key ideas, themes, events and characters, and are able to make reference to these in giving a personal and critical response. Many pupils can select and summarise a range of information from different sources. However, in their study of English literature, although many pupils have an understanding of the elements of critical awareness, they do not consistently articulate it, nor analyse the subtleties of meaning. Pupils are confident in the use of standard English. Many are able to match their talk to the demands of different contexts, varying their vocabulary and communicating clearly and interestingly. Pupils' writing at the end of Key Stage 4 is less assured, although many pupils are able to adapt their style and register to different forms and use a range of sentence structures and varied vocabulary for effect. Narrative writing has control and formal description is generally clear and coherent. Pupils are developing different styles of writing with imaginative and appropriate vocabulary. The majority of their writing communicates clearly and often engages the reader's interest. Higher attaining pupils use a wide range of grammatical constructions accurately.
110. The majority of pupils enter the school with average standards of literacy and results in the standard assessment test results undertaken in Year 6 are in line with national averages. Overall their progress in Years 7 to 9 is good. Pupils' speech is increasingly confident and expressive and, in response to teachers' questioning, pupils exhibit more effective listening skills. They are introduced to a range of books through the guided reading scheme and many become enthusiastic and independent readers. In a Year 7 library lesson several pupils spoke enthusiastically about their enjoyment of the books they had read, whilst others listened with obvious interest. In their writing, pupils are developing different styles, with a good range of vocabulary that is both imaginative and appropriate for its purpose. There is increasing accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, progress is less effective where insufficient thought has been given to the range of ability in the class and the lesson lacks suitable challenge.
111. Pupils make satisfactory progress in individual lessons and over time in Years 10 and 11. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils discussing the poem "Rapunzilstiltskin" responded well to the teacher's questions and became clear about the poet's intentions and how the language being used added to the effect. They exhibited fresh insights into the use of language and displayed a personal response to the poem. Where teaching is more effectively planned and pupils are committed to working productively, progress is more apparent. Higher attaining pupils develop a more perceptive personal response and demonstrate developing analytical and interpretative skills.
112. In each key stage, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress, particularly when teachers' planning meets the needs of individual pupils and when there is additional support. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils had prepared a personal response to a chosen character in a situation from Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men", and were asked to present it to the class. Pupils with English as an additional language were able to join with others and articulate clearly their understanding of a character's reaction in the given situation.
113. Overall, teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of their subject and are effective in the management and organisation of pupils. Where teaching is good, there are clear objectives for the lesson, suitable planning and a good range of work with sequential development. The teacher is active about the classroom, encouraging and supporting pupils. Questioning is inclusive and perceptive, drawing out pupils' understanding to enhance pupils' learning. The marking of written work is regular and consistent. However, it is not always informative as to how the work might be improved. Teaching is particularly good when planning is sufficiently detailed to ensure challenge to pupils and the pace of the lesson is brisk. It is less effective when lesson objectives are unclear and the needs of individual pupils not fully addressed. Homework, where it was observed, appropriately reinforced the learning from the lesson or prepared pupils for progression to the next lesson.

114. The attitudes of pupils are good. Relationships are very positive in that pupils respond well to the teacher. Pupils are prepared to ask questions to aid their understanding and make progress in their work. They work co-operatively, being willing to support and help each other. For example, in a Year 7 lesson on Tennyson's "Lady of Shalott", pupils spoke in an articulate manner, with appropriate description to illustrate their views of the poem, while other pupils listened attentively. Pupils in Years 7 to 9, on occasions, displayed enthusiasm for the subject. Where teaching is less effective, not all pupils work productively, and some pupils in Years 10 and 11 work compliantly without any real commitment.
115. The presentation of work is variable in both key stages. There is little re-drafting and there is irregular use of information technology to improve presentation or for independent study. The faculty has clear procedures for assessment and the marking of pupils' work that are in line with the school's requirements. Regular assessment of pupils' work is undertaken. However, insufficient use is made of prior attainment upon entry and analysis and evaluation of other statistical data are under-developed. Assessment information is not always used effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils, nor does it inform curriculum planning.
116. There is a clear philosophy for the provision of English within the curriculum. Teachers work hard, are well supported and relationships are good. There is a shared commitment to high standards. The faculty benefits from a stable staff that are suitably qualified and experienced. The head of faculty has been recently appointed to the post and still has to develop a personal management style, although she has a clear sense of educational direction and is managing the faculty satisfactorily. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning occur through lesson observation, though not through the sampling of pupils' work. Planning, both within the short and the long term, is insufficiently developed and schemes of work require further updating. However, the curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. There are many opportunities for speaking and listening, and personal reading is encouraged. Pupils are introduced to a wide range and style of writing, both of a formal and informal nature. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils; support for pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language is good, although not all teaching meets the needs of individual pupils. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum is enhanced by the additional provision of a course in media studies. The wide range of extra-curricular activities provided for all pupils further enriches the curriculum. Resources are good and well managed, though the faculty has limited access to ICT, which, whilst used within teaching, is under-developed. The majority of accommodation is good. A significant amount of English teaching is undertaken in temporary buildings, but care has been taken to turn them into pleasant learning environments. In many classrooms, there is attractive and suitable display of pupils' writing.
117. In the period since the last inspection, the good standard of teaching has been maintained, as have the positive relationships. The standard of attainment achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9 has improved, although the achievement of pupils in English literature at the end of Year 11 has not. Reading and speaking skills continue to be of a good standard and pupils' writing is satisfactory. Pupils do not redraft their work sufficiently. Teachers are beginning to adopt some of the principles of the National Literacy Strategy, but this has not been formally integrated into current schemes of work. Resources and accommodation have been improved. Overall, since the last inspection, progress has been satisfactory.

Drama

118. In the course of the inspection drama was sampled. At Key Stage 3 pupils have one lesson each week and at Key Stage 4 a small number of pupils study the subject to GCSE level. Overall, the provision for drama is unsatisfactory. No external examinations were taken in 2001 and in 2000 results were in line with national averages. However, from the small number of lessons observed, attainment currently is below expected standards overall. There is some good teaching within the department, but the quality of teaching overall is unsatisfactory. Teaching in about half the lessons seen was unsatisfactory, while it was satisfactory or good in the other lessons. In the good lessons, planning is structured very well to provide clear progression for pupils' learning;

classroom management is effective so that pupils use their time well and work hard. In these groups pupils' attainment is in line with that expected of their age group. Where teaching is less effective, pupils are not managed well so that they lack motivation, do not work productively and make little progress. Across both key stages there is progression in the development of voice skills. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 speak clearly with appropriate projection, tone, and expression. They are beginning to use pause and inflection suitably. Movement skills are insufficiently developed. The curriculum is clearly expressed and supported by appropriate documentation. Schemes of work are thorough and meet the requirements of the GCSE examinations. The curriculum is significantly enriched by theatre visits and the annual productions that are open to all pupils in the school. Accommodation and resources are sufficient to deliver the curriculum. Teachers work hard and are committed to high standards, but current staffing arrangements impair pupils' learning; the head of subject is employed part-time and the other teachers of drama have responsibilities in another subject which limits the amount of time available for the development of the subject.

Literacy

119. The school has developed a whole-school approach to developing pupils' competences in literacy through staff training, but a policy remains in draft. Some areas of the curriculum, such as science, art, geography and history, have considered the contribution that they can make, but this is neither widespread nor consistent across other subjects. Standards of literacy are in line with those found nationally, with speaking, listening and reading skills a little better than writing skills. Pupils speak confidently and clearly. They have many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, for example, in analysing their own work, and that of other artists in art and in the explanation of their understanding in mathematics. There are few opportunities to speak in an extended format and much of the listening is in response to teachers' questioning. Pupils read competently and find information from their text, identifying key points. Many pupils, particularly in Years 7 to 9 are enthusiastic readers and the library is used for enjoyment and research. Pupils' written work is not always neat and well presented, but is reasonably accurate and specialist terminology is used appropriately. Key words are displayed in a number of classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to write for different audiences and purposes, for example, in art, critical essays on the work of other artists and designers and, in history, narrative accounts of the Wall Street Crash and an analysis of the economic implications. In some subjects, for example, science, mathematics, religious education, history and geography, writing frames are used to support pupils' writing. Drafting as a process of developing work is under-developed.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations are above those of similar schools.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work.
- Teachers form a cohesive team and are developing their teaching effectively, particularly in using methods recommended by the National Numeracy Strategy.
- Regular assessment and marking of work is very effective.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT by both teachers and pupils within lessons.
- The analysis of the progress of each year group and of different groups of pupils.

120. The results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2001 were above the national average and well above those of similar schools for the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level 5. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 6 or above was very high in comparison to similar schools. The Key Stage 3 assessments have been consistently good over the past four

years. Since the attainment of pupils entering the school in Year 7 is close to the national average, this means that they make good progress in Key Stage 3.

121. GCSE results have also been consistently above national averages over the last four years. In 2001, 55 per cent of pupils gained grades A* to C, compared with the national average for boys of 47.5 per cent. The proportion gaining grades A* to G was also above the national average. The results in both Key Stage 3 and GCSE have improved since the last inspection.
122. From a scrutiny of work and in the lessons observed, pupils' attainment is overall in line with national expectations across the school. In Key Stage 3, pupils in higher sets, where the expectation of their thinking skills was high, achieve very well. In lower sets pupils make satisfactory progress. They use clear and accurate drawings to illustrate reflections, although some have poor graphical skills. In Year 8 pupils carry out investigations with some success, discovering patterns and sequences and some are able to decide on algebraic formulae to describe the terms of the sequence. Pupils apply their numeracy skills effectively to the problem of describing numerical patterns. In Year 9 pupils of average attainment are able to find the gradient of a straight-line graph and to formulate its equation; however, some have difficulty with the abstract concepts involved.
123. In Key Stage 4 pupils make satisfactory progress. The use of calculators has improved since the previous inspection when there was some inappropriate use of calculators to carry out simple calculations. However, in Year 11 only a small number of the higher attaining pupils are able to use graphical calculators. Some lower attaining pupils tackle problems from an intermediate level GCSE question paper with some success. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 can evaluate difficult functions and solve quadratic and cubic equations by graphical methods. A small number of higher attaining pupils in Year 11, having completed the GCSE early, are studying at AS level.
124. Teaching is good overall. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory, with almost half good or very good. In Key Stage 3 teachers are beginning to apply the strategies recommended by the National Numeracy Strategy, particularly in planning and teaching a three-part lesson. Most lessons begin with an oral and mental starter, which serves to engage pupils' attention, remind them of ideas already learnt or prepare them for the rest of the lesson. Main teaching activities are mostly well structured, although in some lessons teachers' explanations are too long, leading to some pupils losing concentration. In several lessons teachers made it clear at the beginning what was going to be learnt and in the best lessons returned to this at the end for a plenary session of a few minutes in which pupils' understanding from the lesson was pulled together.
125. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils in both work and behaviour and generally these are fulfilled. Most pupils have a positive attitude to their work and are prepared to listen and contribute well in lessons. Others are more reluctant, but teachers deal with any unacceptable behaviour by making use of the agreed procedures within the department. This leads to a fairly consistent approach, although some classes have different teachers which does not help behaviour management and provide security for the most difficult pupils. Additional teaching support for pupils with special educational needs is provided in a lower set in Year 7, where progress is limited by the behavioural difficulties of some pupils.
126. Teachers have good subject knowledge, appropriate to the classes they are teaching and they usually make effective use of this to raise pupils' level of understanding. In some lessons, however, particularly in teaching algebra with younger pupils, the work is too abstract for some to understand. Teachers do not always pick up the pupils' misunderstandings and this leads to some confusion.
127. Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language are generally satisfactory so that these groups of pupils make satisfactory progress. When learning support assistants are present in mainstream lessons learning is further enhanced and learning becomes good.

128. There was little use of ICT within mathematics lessons, although it is to some extent planned for in schemes of work. Some pupils had used computers in their GCSE coursework, particularly to produce graphs appropriately.
129. The assessment of pupils' work is a strength of the department. There is much helpful and constructive marking in pupils' books. There are regular assessments throughout the school, at the end of each section of work. These are evaluated with National Curriculum levels in Key Stage 3 and contribute to an understanding of likely GCSE grades at Key Stage 4. There is good communication of this information to pupils who as a result know how well they are doing. A weakness of the overall evaluation of achievement is that the department carries out insufficient analysis of the progress of each year group from their levels on entry to the end of each key stage. The progress of different groups such as higher or lower attainers, pupils with English as an additional language, special educational needs or of the different ethnic groups is not measured and compared.
130. The department is well managed, with clear policies and practices. The relatively inexperienced teachers are well supported by the head of department and form a cohesive team. There is good self-evaluation of the work of the department and development planning. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Numeracy

131. Mathematics and science have their own numeracy policies to inform teaching within these subjects. The schemes of work in mathematics contribute well to the development of pupils' basic numeracy skills, especially in Years 7 and 8. A numeracy co-ordinator has been appointed within the mathematics department and the department is preparing a draft numeracy policy for consultation across the school prior to a whole school training day on numeracy. Numeracy catch-up classes for lower attaining pupils in Year 7 and a Numeracy Summer School for the incoming Year 7 form part of future planning for the development of basic numeracy skills.
132. Pupils are required to exercise their numerical and other mathematical skills across a number of subjects. Where this occurs they demonstrate sound knowledge and good application of their skills. In geography they are able to round large numbers when working on population and area. In science from Year 7 onwards, they carry out calculations, use of tables of values, re-arrange formulae, draw bar charts, straight line and curved graphs and lines of best fit. The work is of a high standard across the full range of attainment. An investigation on the speed of planets in orbit, carried out in a Year 11 lesson, required pupils to calculate averages and to use complex formulae, which they did with a high level of success. In ICT, pupils encounter the need for numeracy in work on spreadsheets in Year 11 and in the sixth form. The Part 1, GNVQ in ICT contains basic numeracy as a component. Aspects of work on logo in Year 9 require spatial awareness and control technology requires mental mathematics skills. A mathematics club is popular with younger pupils, enabling them to apply and extend their knowledge and understanding.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- Attainment at Key Stage 3 is well above average.
- The curriculum is planned well; teacher knowledge is good and there is very good technical support.
- There is a clear departmental focus on raising attainment.

Areas for improvement

- The range of teaching styles is often too narrow to take more account of pupils' ideas and to allow them to become more active learners.
- Assessment does not focus sufficiently on informing pupils about how to improve.
- There is insufficient use of ICT.

- The development of pupils' understanding of science and its relevance to society.

133. The attainment of pupils who entered the school in 2001 was above the national average. The standards in work seen at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with those expected nationally, which does not match the high attainment in the results of recent National Curriculum tests. In 2001 the school's performance in the national tests was above the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools. This discrepancy may be due to an enforced rearrangement of the timetable caused by staff changes in this academic year. Attainment is good in Year 9 in the lessons where the teacher sets clear objectives, the tasks are appropriate to the prior attainment of the pupils and the teacher has good relationships with the pupils. This was illustrated in a lesson about conduction, convection and radiation. Where the pupils had a clear idea of what was required they could use their existing science knowledge and observations from the activities to explain, both clearly and confidently, how heat is transferred; for example, they could explain convection in terms of absorbing energy, increased movement of particles and resulting expansion of gases and liquids. When the objectives were not clearly defined the pupils had a tendency to guess at what they thought were relevant ideas and could not justify their explanations
134. Attainment in GCSE examinations is broadly in line with national averages for all pupils and for boys, but is well above that of similar schools. Pupils achieve well throughout Key Stage 4. The overall attainment of pupils currently in Year 11 is higher than that indicated by recent GCSE examination results. For example, in one higher ability class, some Year 11 pupils used their scientific knowledge and understanding confidently to explain their investigation on modelling the factors that determine how satellites are held in orbit. They described the forces involved and their relative effects and made predictions of the effects of different gravitational forces on orbit time, using their results in equations about gravitational forces and graphs to discuss the validity of their predictions and the reliability of their results. In a foundation level GCSE group the class were wiring a plug. They were aware of all the safety issues associated with electrical wiring, they could identify faults and were skilful in their completion of the task. The work seen in lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that attainment at GCSE should improve over the next two years. This is supported by the performance data the department has gathered.
135. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and those learning to speak English are well supported in some science lessons so that they make progress similar to that of their peers. The department is sympathetic to their needs and some teachers employ appropriate strategies to develop both literacy and oracy skills. In one group where pupils are not confident readers, the teacher regularly encourages pupils to practise reading aloud; literacy skills are developed further through carefully structured exercises which involve highlighting and transcribing key words and developing these into full sentences. These techniques help many pupils to improve their literacy skills, but are not used consistently across the department. Pupils' numerical skills are developed systematically. There are many examples of graph work even from younger pupils, who plot straight and curved line graphs and use lines of best fit. However, pupils' use of ICT is very limited.
136. Teaching and learning are good overall. Just over half the lessons seen were good and about a third were satisfactory; there was a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, mainly due to pupils' immature and poor behaviour which was not dealt with well by the teacher. Teachers plan their lessons well, objectives are clear and there is continuity and progression both within lessons and in groups of lessons. Pupils respond well when teachers make their expectations of good behaviour and high work-rate clear and then engage pupils' interest by allowing them to contribute their ideas. In a Year 8 lesson to celebrate science week, groups of pupils were investigating the factors that affect how high an exploding film canister can go using seltzer tablets and water. All the class contributed ideas to discussions and there were good relationships between teacher and pupils, as well as between the pupils themselves. With great excitement, they worked co-operatively and safely throughout the task and obtained meaningful results. However, in some other lessons where the pace was slower and activities were strongly teacher led, the pupils were not as actively involved in the learning process and consequently made limited progress.

137. The quality of teachers' day-to-day marking is satisfactory, but does not focus clearly on learning targets to help pupils improve their science understanding. There was one good example of setting specific learning targets and this good practice should be disseminated throughout the department.
138. Mostly pupils' behaviour is good. It is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 3, being good in the case of most pupils but with some pupils becoming restless and inattentive in a small number of lessons. This is where the work is presented in a way that does not engage their interest or involve them actively in the learning process. Older pupils are much more mature and their behaviour overall is very good. They work well independently and are eager to succeed.
139. The acting head of department has a clear vision about attainment. She has introduced good systems to support teachers' planning and is providing good leadership and management. There have been difficulties in staffing the department with appropriately experienced teachers, but the use of existing expertise and the team ethos are minimising the impact on pupils' learning. A well-organised team of technicians supports the science team effectively. The department has a good system for recording attainment and tracking pupils' progress, but a more systematic process for identifying and informing pupils about how to improve their work could improve this further.
140. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. There has been a steady improvement in National Curriculum and GCSE results above the national trends. Teaching has improved and there is more very good and excellent teaching. The improving assessment systems are effective in raising attainment in lessons, but have not yet had time to feed through into improved examination performance in GCSE.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Planning for lessons is good and teachers make good use of exemplar material.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good.
- The standard of art and craft work is improving.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures lack rigour, and recording and tracking systems lack sufficient relevant detail.
- The present curriculum is too narrow.
- Design work in a vocational context is limited.

141. In 2001, teacher assessments of pupils' work in Year 9 indicated that they were working at a level that was above the national average for pupils of their age. Work seen during the inspection indicates that attainment is broadly in line with national expectations and that the assessments made during the last academic year were too generous. In the GCSE examination in 2001, there was a fall in the number of pupils who achieved A* - C grades when compared with the number who achieved grades A* - C in the previous year. Results in both years were in line with national averages, those of similar schools nationally and other subjects in the school.
142. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment in the subject below the national expectations. However, most pupils are interested in the subject and they work with a reasonable degree of concentration to acquire new knowledge and technical skills that enable them to communicate ideas and express feelings through art and craft activities. The majority enjoy drawing and painting and most develop reasonable control over different media and materials. The highest attaining pupils produce two-dimensional studies that make good use of line, tone and colour. In Year 8 pupils improve their drawing and painting skills. They make better use of line and tone to create two-dimensional studies using pencils and oil crayons. Some struggle,

however, in their use of paint. By Year 9 most pupils have acquired good control over the media and materials that they use. In one lesson pupils produced interesting drawn studies that were based upon textures found on animal skins. The majority make good progress throughout the key stage and reach a level that is broadly in line with national expectations. Although by the end of Year 9, the attainment of most pupils is in line with national expectations, some pupils work at levels which are well above the national standard; for example, in one lesson observed three gifted and talented pupils displayed very good control over pencils, paint and oil pastels for their age.

143. In Key Stage 4, most pupils develop new knowledge and skills in the use of a range of media and materials. In Year 11, a minority of pupils still lack basic drawing and painting skills. Other pupils enjoy working with tissue paper, card and string to make collages. Mainly they produce art and craft work that is based on highly traditional subject matter. Visual diaries show that many of the pupils work independently to produce research ideas within a conventional fine art context. The most able pupils have acquired the self-confidence to experiment with different materials and are beginning to use their own ideas, concepts, attitudes and beliefs as source material in their work. Although some gaps remain in their basic drawing and painting skills, the majority of pupils work at a level that is broadly in line with national averages. There is little investigation carried out or ideas developed using modern technology such as photography or computers, digital cameras, scanners or printers.
144. Pupils with special educational needs are assimilated well into the teaching groups and make satisfactory progress. They work with concentration to acquire the necessary drawing and painting skills that will enable them to communicate their ideas and express their feelings to others. Pupils who have English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.
145. Teaching is satisfactory and almost half of the teaching in Key Stage 3 is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding which they use effectively to teach basic skills in drawing, painting and in the manipulation of craft materials. Lessons are planned well and good use is made of exemplar material. Teaching methods employed are appropriate, ranging from whole class activities to one-to-one interaction between the teacher and individual pupils. Organisation of lessons is good and available resources and time are used well. However, lessons of 50 minutes duration are too short for pupils to develop their ideas sufficiently and this has a negative impact on their learning. Management of pupils in lessons is satisfactory, but there were occasions when teachers continued to talk over a general low level of conversation from pupils so that pupils do not always work in a well structured and disciplined manner. Homework is not set and marked consistently for all groups.
146. The leadership and management of the department are good. Positive changes have occurred since the appointment of the new head of department two years ago. Teachers work collaboratively to produce schemes of work which ensure consistency across the department. The department development plan provides the teaching team with an opportunity to focus on important issues to be raised with the senior management team.
147. Assessing and recording procedures are in place but need to be refined further to make them more rigorous. Currently, pupils are not made sufficiently aware of why their work has been assessed and graded at a particular level. The monitoring and tracking systems, using objective data, are not used effectively to inform target-setting for individual pupils in all key stages.
148. The current level of funding to the department has a negative impact on the breadth and depth of the curriculum offered to pupils. At present there are restrictions on the availability of resources, equipment, media and materials to which pupils have access; there are no computers, scanners, digital cameras or printers within the art rooms. This places severe constraints upon the range of activities offered to pupils, and goes some way to explain why so much emphasis is placed on traditional fine art and craft activities. More opportunities are needed for pupils to explore ideas and experiment with a much wider range of materials in a vocational, work-related design context. Displays of art and craft, both in the art rooms and in the corridors, are satisfactory but they could be used more widely to increase the profile of the subject. The furniture in the art rooms is

unsatisfactory; stools and tables are old and irregularly sized so that it is sometimes difficult to work at comfortable levels. Storage is inadequate to store pupils' work safely.

149. Overall, progress has been satisfactory since the last inspection. Attainment has been maintained at levels in line with national expectations, although pupils enter the school with lower levels of attainment than might be expected.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive.
- Leadership of the department ensures that there is a clear commitment to improvement.

Areas for improvement

- The curriculum does not comply with statutory National Curriculum requirements for the subject.
- Facilities for information technology within the department are inadequate.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall.
- Pupils' work is not always accurately graded.
- New and inexperienced staff require additional support.

150. In 2001 standards in Year 9, as measured by teacher assessments, were in line with national averages. The GCSE results were in line with national averages for grades A*-G, but slightly below the national average for the higher grades A*-C. Over the last three years the school has had difficulties in recruiting suitably experienced teachers and standards of attainment show a downward trend.

151. Currently, pupils in Year 9 are attaining standards below national expectations. The majority of students fail to make satisfactory progress to reach the levels relevant for their age. Their design and making skills are poor. At Key Stage 4, students in Year 10 are also failing to make satisfactory progress, as they are unable to work independently because of limitations in their basic skills and knowledge in designing and making. There are weaknesses in the quality of their outcomes in both graphics and resistant materials. A Year 10 group making lamps had insufficient evidence of their designs in their folders and pupils were unable to demonstrate a clear understanding of the design processes required to make the lamp. However, pupils in Year 11 are working at levels in line with national averages.

152. The school does not fulfil statutory requirements for technology at Key Stage 3. Pupils only have access to resistant materials and graphics and do not have opportunities to study food technology, compliant materials and textiles, as required by the National Curriculum. Pupils in all year groups have insufficient access to ICT. Facilities are inadequate for control technology and computer-aided design and manufacture, with a negative impact on pupils' work, particularly in Years 10 and 11 where pupils do not meet course requirements to apply a range of information technology skills.

153. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall, with a quarter of lessons seen being unsatisfactory. However, in a quarter of lessons in Key Stage 3 teaching is good. In these lessons teaching is well planned and organised, with clear learning objectives. Resources are carefully chosen to support the tasks set and the teacher ensures that all pupils had equal access to them. Teaching motivates and enthuses the pupils, with a positive impact on their learning and their progress. For example, the majority of a Year 8 group made sound progress, designing and making a game using resistant materials. They were able to explain their designs, use knowledge they had acquired from previous lessons and apply a range of skills they had learnt to their work. By contrast, unsatisfactory lessons are poorly planned and organised, learning objectives are not clear and the experiences offered do not match the needs of the students. In one lesson the initial question and answer session to review work in the previous lesson was too long and only involved a small group of pupils. The project work for some pupils was missing and they became bored, which encouraged poor behaviour. As a result their progress was unsatisfactory.

154. Marking and assessment across the department are inconsistent. Marking and assessment of work is not always constructive in Years 7 to 9, so that pupils are unaware of their levels. Overall, teachers are aware of students' prior attainment but rarely use this knowledge to influence their

short term planning. In Year 11 the quality of pupils' course work is satisfactory overall, but varies considerably; work that was well presented included word processing and graphics, mainly done at home where pupils had access to computer facilities. Homework is not set regularly, but when given, it is very relevant to the work in the classroom. However, it is not marked carefully enough to provide adequate feedback to pupils.

155. The head of department is committed to improving the standards in the department but progress is slow. A senior manager provides support by attending departmental meetings and offering general guidance. However, staffing difficulties over the past two years have prevented improvements in key areas of teaching. The department is partly staffed with non-specialist teachers, new to teaching technology, and newly qualified teachers who still require support. Currently weaknesses in the management of the department have a negative impact on the learning of pupils and the standards they achieve; there are insufficient moderation activities across the department to ensure consistency and accuracy in grading; the planning of the programmes of study for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is inadequate to ensure that students receive a continuous programme of learning in line with National Curriculum requirements; and professional development is inadequate to ensure that teachers are kept up to date. Teachers new to the department and non-specialist teachers do not receive sufficient support and guidance in planning, teaching methods and classroom management to overcome existing weaknesses.
156. Accommodation is adequate for the current curriculum. The department has a good spacious area, but best use is not being made of this space. The area could accommodate computer facilities, which would contribute greatly to enhancing the delivery of the subject. The overall environment does not present a good learning environment; some of the furnishings, especially the work benches are old and in a poor state of repair. One external room used for graphics is unsuitable, ill equipped and the flooring presents a safety hazard.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Good use is made of pupils' individual education plans in short term planning.
- Literacy skills are developed well in lessons.
- Teachers have good knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Use of positive behaviour methods is not consistent.
- Information technology is not used widely enough within lessons.

157. Attainment at the end of Year 9 as shown by teacher assessment is close to national averages. This represents good progress from pupils' entry to the school. The department tracks pupils' progress well and an analysis of the initial assessments made in Year 7 confirm that pupils' attainment in geography is well below expectations on entry to the school. By the end of Year 9 boys have good map-work skills and can sketch maps and diagrams to illustrate their work. They can also annotate their diagrams or use extended writing to help explain processes, then describe geographical patterns. Higher attaining pupils can also explain the interaction between different processes of human and physical geography and describe and explain how these interactions will cause different patterns on the earth's surface.
158. The GCSE examination results in 2001 were broadly in line with national averages in terms of both A*/A grades and A* - C grades. A* - G grades were above national expectations for boys. Results at A* - C represent an improvement since 2000, but have not reached the level of attainment in 1999 or the level reported at the last inspection. However, results at A* and A have made steady improvement and are now higher than in 1999. Compared with their Year 9 teacher assessments, boys have made good progress in Years 10 and 11. Work seen during the inspection indicates higher attainment, particularly from the current Year 11 where attainment is at

least in line with the levels of 1999, when attainment was above national expectations. Work seen shows that the boys can explain geographical processes, make comparisons and identify similarities and differences between places, and can describe the effects of human action upon the world's ecosystems. Pupils make good use of case studies to illustrate their work and test hypotheses in the production of their coursework.

159. The quality of teaching is good overall and it was very good in two lessons out of every five seen. Teachers have good subject knowledge, are enthusiastic about the subject and explain processes well to engage their pupils' interest. They have high expectations of their pupils' work. This shows in their marking, with comments made on how the boys could improve their work. Some teachers make good use of individual education plans in short term planning and make good use of positive discipline methods to ensure pupil co-operation in the classroom, but these are not used consistently by all teachers within the department. Teachers incorporate literacy development into their lessons, providing a good range of different resources to include and challenge all pupils. This was particularly well developed in a Year 11 lesson where the teacher's exposition included the use of key words in context to allow the boys to develop and apply their understanding of the effects of human actions on ecosystems.
160. There is a new head of department who has a clear vision of the importance of geography to his pupils and is providing good leadership for the department to operate well together as a team. The curriculum is well planned and gives good emphasis to studies of countries and themes. Enquiry methods are incorporated into these studies and good use is made of opportunities for visits and field-studies to support and reinforce learning in the classroom. Senior managers monitor teaching and the head of department intends to start monitoring teaching within the department. The department holds records of pupils' assessments which are used to track pupils' progress and inform the use of differentiated teaching materials that teachers prepare.
161. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection and is resulting in steadily rising attainment at the highest grades. Field-studies or visits are available to pupils in all years. Resources for learning have improved with the provision of more textbooks, which are supported by the teacher produced and differentiated resources. The use of information technology is limited by restricted access to computers within curriculum time. Teachers have to make use of pupils' access at home or at other times in school.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- The majority of pupils have good achievement in relation to their previous attainment.
- Subject leadership and management are good.
- Teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4 and lessons are carefully and imaginatively planned to meet pupils' needs.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour to work are good overall and very good in Key Stage 4.

Areas for improvement

- There is no effective system of monitoring and target setting, using the full range of available data.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to be involved in setting their own targets and reviewing their own progress.
- Pupils do not have appropriate access to information technology facilities.

162. Throughout the school, pupils' achievements in relation to standards on entry are good. Pupils' good attitudes to work, coupled with the teachers' skills in creatively using all available resources in lessons, lead to the quality of learning in history being very good. All pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2001 indicated that pupils' attainment at that time, was below the national average. Evidence from work produced by pupils currently in Year 9 indicates that they are now working to a higher level

and are achieving in line with national expectations. Pupils who choose to study history in Key Stage 4 continue to make good progress. The GCSE results in 2001 were above the national average for the first time within the last three years. Results have improved considerably since the last inspection when they were well below the national average.

163. In each lesson observed all pupils were very keen to offer responses to questions posed by teachers; orally they are very confident and keen to demonstrate the range of knowledge they have. Their understanding of some of the key historical concepts, such as cause and effect and empathy, are very secure by Year 9. The majority of pupils are skilled at using a wide range of source material and are able to make clear deductions from both written and pictorial evidence. For example, in a Year 11 class, pupils were using photographs to make judgements about the effect propaganda had on the lives of people living in Britain during World War II. They had to evaluate a range of images critically to decide whether a 'blitz spirit' existed. In a Year 9 class, pupils used a variety of both written and pictorial sources to assess the impact of war on civilian life. As a result of this very clear focus on using a wide variety of source material in lessons, pupils are able to produce extended pieces of written work, which include well-reasoned arguments based on historical fact.
164. The last inspection report stated that many pupils were unable to recall factual information. This is no longer the case. In one Year 10 lesson, pupils were seeking to identify the causes of the Wall Street crash. They had to assess whether the crash was a cause or an effect of the 1929-33 depression. The oral responses given by all pupils to questions posed by the teacher indicated clearly that factual recall was a real strength. Year 7 pupils demonstrated both the depth and range of their knowledge when considering all the reasons that led to the trial and execution of Charles I. The last report stated that standards of written work produced were variable and that younger pupils in particular were constricted by their lack of language skills. Raising literacy levels has been a priority for the department since September 2000. Pupils are given a range of tasks to enable them to produce written work to a consistently high standard. Writing frames are provided to guide pupils who find it difficult to structure their work. All teachers are fully committed to improving the literacy skills of the pupils. They regularly use appropriate historical terminology to extend pupils' vocabulary in lessons and ask questions to check understanding. Key words are displayed in the classrooms. From Year 7 onwards pupils produce written work of both a creative and factual nature. Homework is regularly set and pupils are often required to carry out 'in depth' research to extend their knowledge of the unit of work being studied in class.
165. Teaching throughout the department is good and often very good in Key Stage 4. The very good teaching is characterised by carefully planned lessons, which engage the interest of the pupils from the moment they enter the classroom. In these lessons all pupils are actively encouraged to make a significant oral contribution over the course of the lesson. Lesson planning is good. Planning is very thorough and pupils are set a wide range of different tasks to both capture their interest and extend their knowledge. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work independently, in pairs and in small groups. Pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language make good progress as a result of the very good teaching they receive. The department is addressing the needs of pupils who are particularly gifted or talented. Extension work, based on a series of short 'snappy' tasks devised by department staff, is designed to improve further both their knowledge and skills. In all lessons, teachers demand high standards of both work and behaviour and the response from pupils is positive. The improvement in standards of all pupils can be directly attributed to good and imaginative teaching. Learning opportunities for pupils are currently limited as they are unable to use ICT in lessons.
166. To raise standards further, the department needs to review the way in which it uses the wide range of data available within the school to track the progress of all pupils. The department has successfully used the information gained from assessed tasks to rewrite schemes of work in Key Stage 3 and to change the examination syllabus for current Year 10 pupils. A system enabling pupils to review their own progress has been introduced recently. The department now needs to use assessment results to plot the progress made by each pupil as they move through each key stage and set targets that are clear, concise and measurable. Opportunities for pupils to be more involved in monitoring and reviewing their own progress should be provided.

167. The history department is part of the faculty of humanities. The current head of history has now been in post for eighteen months. Her management and leadership skills are good. She plays a full and active role in the teaching and has introduced innovative and imaginative schemes of work. Relationships between staff working in this area show a strong unity and a shared concern for continuing improvement and progress. This sense of common purpose is reinforced by effective communication and excellent documentation, which covers comprehensively all aspects of the work of the department. In line with school policy the department has published a department improvement plan with targets based on raising attainment particularly at Key Stage 3. The current upward trend can be attributed to the management skills and expertise of the head of department and her commitment to raising standards year on year. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is **satisfactory** in the discrete ICT courses, but there is insufficient access in other subjects.

Strengths

- Good management of pupils in lessons ensures that pupils' attitudes are good.
- Faculty documentation provides good support for the teaching of the subject.
- Accommodation and computer resources available in the suite of rooms.
- Administration and technical support for the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment throughout each year group is too low.
- Key Stage 3 teaching methods are limited.
- Monitoring of pupils' progress in discrete courses is inadequate.
- The curriculum does not match the needs of all pupils.
- Key Stage 4 resources, access and provision across all subjects, including ICT discrete courses, are limited.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided to develop literacy and numeracy skills within the ICT curriculum.

168. The overall provision for ICT is satisfactory in the discrete ICT courses but there is insufficient access and resource across the school to enhance the pupils' capability through subjects and support more widely the raising of attainment. Since the recent improvements in management, staffing and resources, the school is now making sound progress in the discrete courses and is addressing the strategic educational direction for ICT across the school.

169. The GCSE short course examination results in 2001 were well below the national averages for grades A* - C and above the averages for grades A* - G. Pupils gain better grades in other subjects than in ICT. The improvement in the faculty subject provision is beginning to be seen in the better grades in A* - G grade range. There is a good understanding of the challenge that the faculty faces to raise attainment in the A* - C range of grades. To pursue this objective pupils in Year 11 this year are taking the GNVQ Intermediate Part 1 course, with the option that a significant number will take the CLAIT examination as an alternative qualification.

170. Pupils enter the school with a varied but low standard of computer competence for eleven year olds. Their attainment by 14 is less varied, with the majority working positively towards the national expectation for their age, but not yet achieving this standard. Pupils in Year 7 find the set exercises on general use of the hardware and software both stimulating and challenging; however, the more able have too little opportunity to enhance their performance by application of the skills learnt. By Year 9 the modelling and control activities are developing a wide range of computer skills at a basic level of competency, but these skills are not developing in a wide enough context to support an improvement in the quality of their school work across a range of subjects. The standard of attainment is below the national average for their age at 14.

171. At the age of 16, attainment by a significant number of pupils is still lower than national expectations. Although the majority can use their skills to generate, develop, organise and present their work, much of it is at a basic level. A significant number of pupils also find it difficult to complete the full range of work required; some have gaps in their basic ICT experiences and, without considerable support from their teacher, become disillusioned and lack motivation. However, those pupils with sound attainment standards by this age are becoming more thoroughly competent at the range of basic skills and applications. They know about real world applications of information technology and are beginning to understand the implications for future working life. They can by now use ICT to structure, refine and present information in different forms and styles for specific purposes, such as animated presentations using Powerpoint for simulated 'commercial' type of projects.
172. Standards of achievement in Key Stage 3 and 4 are satisfactory. In Key Stage 3 there are strengths in aspects, such as communications and handling information, in relation to pupils' prior attainment. Some pupils benefit from home computing facilities which promote high standards of school work, as do those few who gain access to the small number of computers in the school library. In the aspects of control, measuring and modelling, the link to other subjects, where the context is more suitable for developing pupils' ICT competencies, is not developed sufficiently, mainly because of limitation of resources and access to resources. For example, science and design and technology need to deliver National Curriculum units of work that teach ICT skills and competencies in a much stronger learning and relevant context to extend the pupils' standards of achievement further and more appropriately. Progress in the Key Stage 4 GNVQ course is at times good, whereas the challenge in the CLAIT course is less than that needed to motivate high levels of learning.
173. Pupils' attitude to learning is good. Pupils enjoy ICT to the extent that behaviour is sound and so are relationships. They are interested and sustain high concentration levels whilst, for example, using spreadsheet software. Their concentration and attitude help to improve pupils' progress, even on demanding aspects of the subject. A few pupils do let themselves down on occasion with discourteous behaviour and show very limited ambition for improvement to their work. Teachers deal effectively with these incidents, ensuring the learning for the majority is effective.
174. The quality of teaching for both key stages is sound. In one in ten lessons teaching is good and is confident, stimulating and very knowledgeable about the subject. The good preparation for teaching has clear objectives, is well founded in subject content, presented sometimes using ICT and has an appropriate range of good learning activities. Teaching strategies are well-matched to the pupils' needs, with work organised in a range of stimulating ways and taught with enthusiasm. There is appropriate pace to the lesson with well-focused and assessed learning outcomes for all the pupils. In the lessons not reaching the highest standards, teaching methods are more limited. Learning outcomes are less effective for pupils because assessment is not rigorous enough. The use of assessment to monitor and inform the next stage of the teaching and learning is underdeveloped.
175. The school's present approach to meeting requirements for the National Curriculum is mainly through discrete courses and does not take sufficient account of potential provision within other subjects. However, the ICT schemes of work meet the minimum requirements for both key stages. Each part of the course is well structured and the courses overall provide for continuity. The subject has made significant improvements to its provision in the last few years, notably the ICT facilities and equipment, supporting improvements in coverage of the scheme of work. The Key Stage 3 course is effective in providing a sound basic scheme for pupils, but monitoring procedures and the use of assessing pupils' attainment are not established sufficiently to inform teaching. In the faculty the assessment system ensures that marking is recorded, but the focus is mainly on rewarding pupils for taking tasks through to completion. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 provides access to the National Curriculum Programme of Study for all pupils. However, the restrictions of time for the GNVQ course prevent sufficient progress for the majority of pupils.

176. The leadership responsibility and management arrangements for the discrete subject are sound. Since the last inspection, improvements have been satisfactory overall. The provision for the subject has improved significantly and now matches its intentions. The co-ordination and auditing of all the subject contributions to ICT have not developed sufficiently but the school has strategies in place to do so. The current ICT programme is timetabled effectively, making good use of the present accommodation and efficient use of the resources. However, whole school management strategies are insecure and do not ensure that the best quality curriculum is being delivered to pupils. Accommodation and learning resources are good for the present programme, with a computer to pupil ratio of 1:10, which is broadly in line with the national average. However, other subjects have very limited access to ICT facilities and can make little or no contribution to wider technological education. The staff development programme has matched the demands of the changes that have taken place recently for the ICT programme; however, training for the needs of staff across the school is planned but remains to be fulfilled. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
- High-attaining pupils, as well as those of low attainment, achieve well in GCSE examinations.
- The large majority of pupils achieve to their potential.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The faculty is energetically led and efficiently managed.

Areas for improvement

- Poor behaviour and motivation of a few pupils, especially those affected by changes of staff, are leading to some underachievement.
- There is not enough use of assessment information data to identify and set targets for pupils who are underachieving.

177. German is the main language taught throughout the school, but for the past three years pupils have had the choice, on entry, of studying either French or German until Year 10, when there is an option to study either or both languages.

178. Standards in German are above national averages at age 16 as measured by the results of GCSE examinations over the past three years. Passes at grades A* to C in 2001 were above the national average for boys. The proportion of boys achieving the top two grades A* and A was well above the average and nearly all pupils entered for GCSE gained at least a grade G. This indicates that the school does well for the whole ability range. The school's analysis of GCSE results indicates that pupils from Asian families perform particularly well in German.

179. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards overall in German in Year 11 are in line with the national average. High-attaining pupils in top sets are reaching well above average standards. The majority of middle and lower-attaining pupils are achieving to their potential. No pupils are currently studying French at age 16. Standards seen in German and French at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations overall.

180. Pupils generally achieve well in modern foreign languages. However, staffing difficulties in the school year 2000 - 2001 caused problems to younger pupils who had many changes of teacher, particularly in French. Some of these pupils now demonstrate gaps in their knowledge and loss of confidence and are not achieving as well as they should. Timetabling difficulties have led to one German class in Year 7 being taught by three different teachers each week. Pupils in this group are not achieving to their potential. Overall, however, standards show a good improvement since the last inspection.

181. By Year 9 most pupils speak and write in German using both present and past tenses; they have a wide vocabulary covering topics about, for example, home, school, shopping and meals. They speak with confidence and with good German pronunciation and understand familiar words and phrases of German spoken at normal speed. In French, pupils have reasonable accents and pronunciation and can say quite a lot about themselves, for example, the types of television programmes they like watching. High-attainers in both stages write accurately in French and German, but have too little opportunity to write creatively using a variety of register, such as simple poetry or journalism. Low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well by virtue of teaching that recognises their needs. In a well-managed lesson in one of the computer rooms, for example, low-attaining boys in Year 9 made good progress in recognising phrases in German through an appropriate exercise in which they matched these phrases with corresponding graphic images.
182. In German, by Year 11, pupils can extract information from videotaped passages, take telephone messages at home and in the office, including transcribing telephone numbers and spelling names. They hold simple conversations, answer questions and read aloud clearly and with good accents. They read for meaning and express the sense of a German passage orally in English. They can compose paragraphs of original German on topics within their experience, with largely correct spelling and grammar. Pupils of average attainment achieve well through strong teaching and speak in confident, well-pronounced German.
183. Pupils generally have satisfactory attitudes to modern foreign languages throughout the school; most try hard and behave well in lessons. However, attitudes and behaviour are best where teaching is good or very good and where behaviour management is secure and consistent. Some lessons are disturbed by pupils' behaviour difficulties and pupils who are taught by a different teacher in each of their three lessons each week are visibly less settled than other classes.
184. Teaching in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory overall in both languages. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection and a half of lessons seen were good or very good. Teaching is good overall in Key Stage 4, with one-third of the lessons being very good. Strengths in teaching include good knowledge of both languages and a skilful use of different methods and approaches. In lessons where this best practice is seen the lesson proceeds with good pace and teachers make the maximum use of French or German consistent with pupils understanding what is going on. Teachers share with pupils what they will be learning and this sets up anticipation and high expectations. Pupils are actively involved in a wide variety of activities including class, pair and group work and there is a good balance of speaking, listening and responding, reading and writing. This makes lessons interesting and often exciting and maintains high motivation.
185. The skills of the student teacher and the German assistant are put to very good use. For example, in a successful German lesson with Year 11 pupils, the teacher split the group into three, each with an adult leading dialogue in German and with different tasks according to the pupils' level of attainment. This allowed the most able linguists to excel and the others to work comfortably at their own level. Most lessons are carefully planned with strategies included for ensuring the good progress of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This ensures that all pupils are able to make progress. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and with encouraging comments. However, pupils do not repeat or redraft sub-standard work often enough and there are not sufficient suggestions for how they can improve their work. In lessons which, although satisfactory, have features requiring improvement, teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour in a consistent way and lessons are interrupted by the need to restore discipline. This leads to more pupils becoming restless and losing interest in the lesson.
186. The modern foreign languages faculty benefits from energetic and supportive leadership which is developing both German and French successfully. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The management of the faculty is now efficient and well focused on the goal of improving standards. The faculty's policies, criticised in the previous report for being inadequately carried out in practice, are now well enacted in the classroom. Planning is good. Staff in the faculty work well as a team and are involved in writing schemes of work which draw on a range of resources rather than on a single published scheme. Assessment of pupils' progress is regular and

systematic; good records are kept of assessment results. However, the faculty does not yet use these results enough to compare against pupils' potential, identify those who are underachieving and set targets to help them improve. Teachers in the faculty make good use of ICT and their classrooms have attractive displays of pupils' work, much of it done using a computer.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is very good.
- Pupils' response to music is often excellent.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work across both key stages are insufficiently developed.
- Assessment procedures are limited.
- Poor resources limit the range of activities possible within lessons.

187. Pupils at Key Stage 3 produce work in line with national expectations. They meet expectations in performing and composing, although a significant minority fall below this standard. Pupils listen and appraise music well and show satisfactory knowledge and understanding of musical terms and processes.
188. At Key Stage 4 only small numbers follow the GCSE courses, which makes statistical comparisons unreliable. Pupils vary considerably in the standards they attain. Recent GCSE results confirm this variability. Nevertheless, pupils reach standards in line with national averages overall. The variation is predominantly in the practical areas of performing and composing, where some pupils have the advantage of additional instrumental lessons whilst others have difficulty in both areas. There is greater consistency in the standards attained in listening and appraising, where pupils are able to apply their knowledge and understanding competently. Pupils demonstrate competence in the use of keyboards across the key stages. There are, however, no computers in the department which limits pupils' achievements at Key Stage 4.
189. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language produce work according to their individual talents and make good progress.
190. Sixty-four pupils take instrumental lessons provided by tutors from the Hounslow Music Service, with the exception of one tutor who is privately employed by the school to teach a variety of instruments. The proportion of pupils receiving instrumental tuition is below the national average. Extra-curricular activities are limited in scope but the annual school production attracts large numbers of pupils and provides good learning experiences.
191. Pupils' response to music is very good and often excellent. They work with concentration and respond well to the teachers and to each other's efforts. They act responsibly when moving from one activity to another, for example, from whole class to practical activities and make maximum use of available time in these transitions.
192. The quality of teaching is predominantly very good and at times excellent. There are key strengths in the teaching; well-planned activities, good organisation and management, excellent pace and the provision of differentiated tasks, which enable all pupils to make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. There are, however, no schemes of work. Assessment procedures are good at Key Stage 4 but undeveloped at Key Stage 3. Assessment is not yet linked to National Curriculum level descriptors. Schemes of work are addressed in the department's stated areas for development and there is awareness of the need to adopt the whole school policy for the assessment of pupils' work.
193. The head of the music department is a recent appointment and has made a satisfactory start to addressing identified areas for development. He works within a supportive expressive arts faculty structure, with regular faculty meetings to review provision. Instrumental activities are well organised and the two music teachers work collaboratively to good effect. Pupils are grouped in classes of 20 at Key Stage 3, an arrangement that helps raise standards.

194. Accommodation is sufficient although the use of one classroom for drama teaching causes significant problems in moving from one activity to another. Resources are poor, with many instruments ranging from pianos to orchestral instruments needing repair and maintenance. There are no computers for the use of staff or students.
195. Since the last inspection improvement is satisfactory. There has been a consolidation of standards of attainment at Key Stage 3.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes contribute well to a purposeful learning atmosphere.
- Pupils achieve well in the courses they follow.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades in GCSE is well above the national averages.
- The breadth of extra-curricular provision and success in competitive sport.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching is not consistent.
- The organisation of single and double periods limits curriculum breadth.
- The range of accommodation is inadequate.

196. In the end of Key Stage 3 teachers' assessments in 2001, the proportion of pupils obtaining Level 5 or above was well above national expectations. However, in work seen during the inspection, standards are average for pupils at the age of 14. In the course that all pupils take in Years 10 and 11, standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are above average. The number of pupils taking the GCSE games course is having a positive impact on the overall standards in the non-examination course.
197. At Key Stage 3, achievement is good in association football for all groups of pupils in relation to their attainment on entry and their physical capabilities. By Year 9 the more talented pupils have developed some good individual skills such as close control, turning and accurate passing. The less physically capable have secure all round skills but the accuracy of their passing is not as good. All, however, successfully plan defensive and attacking strategies from throw-ins. In small-sided games there is movement off the ball and some good communication between players; this improves the flow of and quality of general play overall.
198. Achievement is also good in Key Stage 4 in relation to pupils' physical capabilities. Despite a lack of experience of badminton in Years 7 to 9, pupils use a variety of strokes and sustain rallies well by Year 11. The more talented use power and variability of direction very well. The less physically capable do not use footwork well enough and have a tendency to rely on overhead shots. In weights, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the principles involved, as well as having successfully developed their own personal exercise programmes. They also have a good understanding of safety requirements. Although some pupils have good individual skills and techniques in basketball, overall teamwork standards are depressed because of the cramped conditions of the gymnasium and lack of up-to-date court markings in the larger sports hall.
199. In all years, pupils have a secure grasp of the principles and procedures of preparing for physical activity. For example, pupils take responsibility in small groups for their own warm-up at the start of lessons. Although no pupils with special educational needs were observed with additional help, they are well supported and integrated so that they make good progress. Physically talented pupils achieve well in lessons and are provided with further opportunities through extra-curricular activities and school teams.
200. GCSE physical education is an optional course taken by many pupils. The proportion of pupils achieving higher grade passes declined after the last inspection and in 2000 was well below the

national average. However, in 2001, the proportion of pupils achieving higher grades was well above the national average and the subject was the best performing in the school. Work seen during the inspection was of this same high level. Year 10 pupils have made a good start to the course. Pupils have developed a good knowledge and understanding of factors affecting participation and performance in sport and some pupils are already developing their own personal fitness programmes. Year 11 pupils are developing their knowledge and understanding of the functions of the body systems. In both years, some pupils are using ICT for research purposes as well as for presenting their work. In their Year 11 practical lessons in badminton, the more able pupils use a good range of shots and are applying disguise well to deceive opponents.

201. The quality of teaching is good in all years and results in effective learning and progress for all pupils. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. All lessons have a well structured start and teachers have high standards in terms of pupils' discipline and behaviour and manage their classes well. Pupils' response to this is positive, which helps to promote a positive learning atmosphere in lessons. For example, pupils work well together in ethnically mixed pairs and small groups, showing clear respect for the capabilities of one another. In a Year 9 association football lesson, for example, boys worked well together as pairs and small groups to develop tactical play from throw-ins. A few Year 10 pupils, however, were disruptive at the start of an association football lesson and because the teacher did not challenge them as a whole group about their negative attitudes, they were slow to settle. In most lessons, pupils are told the learning objectives and given clear instructions, together with an effective breakdown and demonstration of required skills. This approach ensures that all pupils are aware of what is expected of them and what they have to do to make progress. It is also indicative of teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the activities being taught and shows pupils how to adapt, refine and improve their own practice. In a Year 11 GCSE badminton lesson, this was a significant factor in helping most pupils make very good progress in developing the use of the drop shot.
202. A variety of structured activities in lessons help pupils to stay motivated as well as providing progression and challenge. In a Year 10 badminton lesson, for example, this helped when introducing pupils to the use of the smash shot. However, in a Year 11 badminton lesson, there was insufficient challenge for those GCSE pupils in the group. Effective questioning by teachers enhances pupils' speaking and listening skills and ensures they understand the terminology being used. This was effective in another Year 11 GCSE badminton lesson where pupils were involved in the analysis of each other's performance. Pupils are made aware of their capabilities because teachers move around well in lessons to offer praise and constructive criticism as, for example, in another Year 9 association football lesson where pupils were developing positional and supportive play tactics in readiness for their inter-form tournament. GCSE theory is marked consistently, but the lack of a structured coverage checklist means that some pupils are not as well organised as they could be in terms of completing all the required work.
203. There are, however, a few inconsistencies in teaching. On occasion, there is a lack of urgency at the start of the long double lessons and the learning objectives are not always as clear as they could be; in some instances pupils are simply told what the lesson coverage will be. Teachers do not always make effective use of the whiteboard at the start of lessons to improve pupils' basic literacy skills by writing up key words and terminology. In most lessons, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in evaluation by observing and coaching one another. Sometimes, there is a tendency for the teacher to take the lead in evaluating progress at the end of lessons without also asking pupils for their responses as to what they feel they have achieved.
204. Staffing has changed considerably since the previous inspection. The recently appointed head of department provides effective leadership and management, with an appropriate focus on raising standards and the quality of provision. Good quality improvement planning and other documentation guides the work of the department. Good quality schemes of work reflect fully the requirements of the National Curriculum and guide teachers' short, medium and long term planning well. Whole school timetabling and the department's organisation of double and single period activities impair curriculum breadth. As a result of this badminton is not introduced until Year 10 and hockey is no longer taught. The barely adequate overall quality and range of accommodation affects standards; for example, in basketball there are still no up-to-date markings and the outdoor

hard surface areas, as at the time of the last inspection, are unsuitable for use. Changing facilities are cramped and shower arrangements do not provide the privacy expected by pupils because there are no cubicles. This has a potentially negative impact on standards of personal hygiene and does little for pupils' self esteem.

205. A very good range of extra-curricular activities throughout the year extends learning opportunities. These now include recreational activities as well as inter-form competitions and inter-school competitive fixtures. The latter still includes a full programme on Saturday mornings throughout the year. Approximately a third of pupils have represented the school in inter-school competitive fixtures since the start of this school year. As a result of the continuing enthusiasm of teachers, some of whom are from other departments, individual pupils have achieved representative honours at borough, county and national levels in a range of sports. On the whole, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory with standards and quality of provision having been maintained.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of the topics they study.
- Teaching is consistently good which enables pupils to achieve well.
- Religious education contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- The school does not comply with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus to provide religious education for all pupils in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.
- There are no opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to gain accreditation.
- There are insufficient links with the local community to make religious education more real and experiential within the context of the multi-religious backgrounds of many of the pupils.

206. Overall, standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are as expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils who have English as an additional language and those with special educational needs do well in relation to their prior learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, as most pupils in Years 10 and 11 study religious education as part of the personal, social and health education curriculum, which does not incorporate some elements of the agreed syllabus fully, statutory requirements are not being met. The lack of opportunity for all pupils to study religious education reduces their motivation to study the subject at a deeper and more reflective level and to gain qualifications in religious studies.

207. At the start of Year 7, many students have limited understanding of the subject. Achievement in lessons is good because many activities are provided to promote learning about religion and learning from it. For example, pupils in Year 7 explored about the 'puzzle of God' by conducting interviews as part of their homework about the questions of God, heaven and hell. Two pupils recited the poems they had written as homework to the class, demonstrating that they had reflected well on these issues of ultimate reality and developed a good understanding about them. Pupils in Year 8 are gaining a good knowledge about Judaism and can distinguish between kosher and non-kosher foods. They also know that the Mezuzah contains the Jewish prayer called 'Shema'. Pupils in Year 9 pupils are developing an insight into how the holocaust is an example of evil and suffering in the world.

208. The quality of teaching is good overall. Some key features of teaching are particularly good. Teaching is mainly by specialists in religious education, who demonstrate very good subject knowledge and make it comprehensible for pupils in a lively and informative manner. Objectives are made clear and there are high expectations both for learning and good behaviour. There is good lesson planning that takes into account the needs, interests and motivation of pupils. Work is provided which challenges all pupils and additional help is provided for those who need such support. Relationships are good, based on genuine mutual understanding of each other. Pupils are encouraged to use websites to find information for homework. In all of the lessons seen,

teaching was lively and yet reflective and the time was used effectively. In a very good lesson observed, Year 9 pupils looked in amazement but also shock as the teacher rolled out one by one four rolls of a hundred sheets of paper, each sheet depicting 150,000 dots and each dot representing a person to illustrate the magnitude of the killing of six million Jews. This was a good visual representation of evil and suffering under the Nazis and enabled pupils to develop skills of empathy much more deeply. All pupils were kept interested and involved in the task, with a lot of reflective discussion and co-operation, and they also made effective connections with the events of 11th September. Pupils' written work is marked promptly and annotated with informative and helpful comments. Occasionally the rounding off of the lesson and linking it to the objectives achieved is left too late or not fully done to consolidate learning.

209. Pupils respond well to religious education and their involvement is high when teaching is linked to their interests, experiences and matters of concern to them. They like to talk about different religions, their relationships with each other and sharing their own experiences, particularly from their own religious perspectives. They make the most of the opportunities, when they are given the responsibility to do so. They work well together and respect the feelings and beliefs of others, but very occasionally when a small group of pupils try to disrupt learning for others and themselves, they are dealt with effectively.
210. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for Years 7 to 9 but it does not meet the requirements for Years 10 to 13. The school has devised a scheme of work based on the Hounslow Agreed Syllabus for Years 7 to 9 only. Other statutory religious education in Years 10 to 13 is not appropriately delivered through the personal development curriculum and such provision undermines the distinctiveness of religious education. Pupils have the opportunity to visit the Jewish Museum, listen to a holocaust survivor and a local rabbi and watch a Jewish exhibition. As there are pupils in significant numbers from Muslim, Christian, Hindu and Sikh backgrounds, it is a shortcoming that visitors or parents of students from these communities are not regularly invited for religious education and for addressing assemblies or participating in celebrations.
211. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn about the existence of God, explore religious experiences and reflect on good and evil. They learn to respect each other's beliefs and values and have opportunities to share experiences and help each other. The subject also makes a sound contribution to literacy as opportunities are made available for pupils to practise listening and speaking, reading and writing for a variety of purposes. They learn key words and their meaning and they have opportunities for extended writing or short research exercises as homework. There was some use of numeracy in relation to writing in figures the number of holocaust victims or reference made in lessons to information technology for research in homework but there was little use in their work seen.
212. The present head of department, who also is a newly qualified teacher, undertook the role at the beginning of the autumn term and is providing effective leadership and support for the subject. The new system of assessment is being implemented and is appropriately linked to the attainment targets for religious education. The specialist room and the corridor and landing space outside includes sensitive displays of artefacts, pictures and pupils' work in writing; curtains made of squares of symbols of world religions help to create a pleasant learning environment. Resources, such as books, worksheets, videos, artefacts and pictures are adequate, which are supplemented within the school library. Improvements in these aspects are satisfactory since the last inspection. However, the issues raised in the last inspection in relation to compliance with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for Years 10 to 13 remain unresolved.

PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, nine subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2001.

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	8	38	62	0	15	0.8	1.5
Physics	1	100	52	100	4	4.0	0.9

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	22	82	87	32	43	4.7	5.8
Chemistry	8	88	90	13	43	4.2	5.9
Biology	8	100	88	38	34	6.5	5.2
Physics	13	100	88	31	40	5.5	5.7
Design and technology	6	67	91	0	30	2.7	5.4
Business Studies	11	82	92	0	32	4.2	5.5
Economics	8	88	89	0	36	4.0	5.5
Computer studies	25	84	86	28	23	5.2	4.6
Sports/PE studies	9	78	92	0	25	3.8	5.1
Art and design	9	100	92	100	46	10.0	6.6
Music	1	100	93	0	35	4.0	5.7
Drama	1	100	99	0	38	4.0	6.6
Geography	5	100	92	0	38	5.2	5.7
History	7	100	88	0	35	3.7	5.5
Sociology	6	100	86	67	35	7.0	5.3
Other social studies	2	50	87	0	34	3.0	5.3
English literature	14	100	95	0	37	4.4	5.9
English language	5	100	92	80	30	7.6	5.3
Communication studies	3	100	93	67	31	6.0	5.5
German	1	100	91	0	40	4.0	5.8

Other languages	1	100	93	0	56	2.0	6.8
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Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business	11	73	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
Leisure and tourism	10	50	n/a	20	n/a	0	n/a

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- A level results in 2001 are above the national average, with a high proportion attaining the highest grade.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and their expertise is used to good effect.
- Students' progress is carefully monitored throughout the course, with regular testing and feedback to them.

Areas for improvement

- The analysis of progress made by students of different ethnic groups and of different prior attainment on entry to the course is inadequate.

213. Over the last four years the A-level results in mathematics have been in line with national results. However, for 2001 both the average point score, the proportion of students passing and the number of students gaining A grades are above the national average and above that of other subjects. The results were in line with the expectation for these students, all of whom entered the course with either A or B grades in GCSE mathematics. Results at AS level in 2001 are below the national average.

214. In the lessons observed students' attainment was of average A-level standard in Year 13 and there are a number of students in both years, including those studying further mathematics, whose attainment is above average. The level of attainment in statistics, pure mathematics and mechanics in Year 12 is about average. The level of attainment in further mathematics and statistics courses in Year 13 is high. Students in statistics understand how to calculate correlations and to interpret results. Some graphical work is of a high standard, but some is inaccurate, with insufficient attention to precise diagrams. Students in pure mathematics understand basic differentiation and its application to finding turning points in algebraic functions and are able to find the area under a curve by integration. In mechanics students gain an understanding of impulse and momentum change, the laws of motion, vectors and vector notation. In statistics students have an advanced understanding and are able to apply binomial, Poisson and normal analyses of distributions, and to compare the results. In further mathematics students solve first order differential equations successfully. Students' progress is generally satisfactory and sometimes good. Some of the students who entered the course with a grade B at the intermediate level in GCSE are making very good progress and half way through Year 12 are achieving equivalent levels to those with a grade A at GCSE.

215. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively, particularly in using questioning to promote students' learning. Teaching is good. The level of work is usually well matched to the students' understanding, both at the higher and intermediate levels. Teachers make effective use of modelling for students of how they might approach particular problems. Explanations are clear, although occasionally over long. In some lessons the theoretical work is not sufficiently supported by practical examples and, for some mechanics students in the early stages of their learning, by greater use of diagrams. Teachers maintain a good pace of work over the double periods allocated for the subject by effective planning and by maintaining an interaction with the students. The best are planned in detail, so that rigorous demands can be placed on the students' thinking. Relationships with students are good and the students themselves have a positive attitude in the lessons. They respond well to questions and some are able to give clear analytical explanations. The students' work is assessed at regular intervals and their level of attainment relative to A-level criteria is fed back to them. This contributes considerably to their overall understanding of what they need to achieve.
216. The department is well managed and teachers' expertise is generally well deployed to cover the A-level work. A number of teachers in the department are able to contribute to A-level teaching, but the school has experienced difficulty in recruiting a temporary teacher able to cover lessons at this level. This problem has been addressed by combining sets so that no student is without a sufficiently qualified teacher. The recruitment of students to the A-level courses is on the basis of an A or B grade at GCSE, and this is justified by the results achieved. The department has been successful in ensuring that students entering with a B grade or above make good progress and gain good A-level grades. The management of the new A-level arrangements is proving effective, with students satisfied with the teaching they receive on the different levels of course. A positive side effect of the new arrangements is that a small number of students who take GCSE early in Year 10 are able to study A-level courses in Year 11.

SCIENCES

The focus of this inspection was on chemistry. Biology and physics were also sampled. In biology, standards have been well above national averages for each of the last three years. One lesson was observed and teaching was very good. A range of written and diagrammatic resources was used and a structure provided for students to build their own notes. The lesson was well planned to promote learning for students of different preferred learning styles and computer simulation was very well used to explain a difficult concept. In physics, standards are in line with national averages. Teaching has been adversely affected by the departure of the head of physics and the difficulties the school is facing in recruiting a replacement. One lesson was observed. The arrangements the school has put in place are effectively supporting students' learning. Students are making good progress on the exercises set. With the answers available, they were able to monitor their own grasp of the subject matter and they were supporting each other in consolidating understanding. Their attitudes, in the absence of a physics specialist, are excellent.

Chemistry

Overall the quality of the provision in chemistry is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and the syllabus.
- Students work well together and have good relationships with their teachers.
- Teachers provide good support and individual guidance to students.
- Achievement is always satisfactory and sometimes good.

Areas for improvement

- There is not enough variety in teaching methods, particularly to involve students more actively.
- Available data is not used sufficiently to ensure all students achieve to their potential.
- The use of ICT to support students' learning is not well developed.

217. Results in A-level chemistry have varied from just below to just above national averages. In 2000 they were above while in 2001 they were below. The school uses a commercial value-added package which shows that variations in results are in line with students' prior attainment on entry to the course. The retention rate from AS to A2 courses was very good in 2001 and there is virtually no drop out from the courses.
218. The standards of work seen by current students are above average in Year 13 and well above in Year 12. Module results have been in line with students' prior attainment for boys of all ethnic groups and prior attainment. In Year 13, the most able students are able to use concepts such as Gibb's free energy and electromotive force (EMF) to explain chemical reactions. They are also confident in using formulae to, for example, calculate equilibrium constants from the EMFs of cells. Their observation skills are well developed and they note not only colour changes but also fine detail such as texture and temperature changes. The lower attaining students make errors of sign in calculating EMFs from standard reduction potentials and confine their observation to the most obvious. In Year 12, students are confident in using the concepts of activation energy, rate constants and order of reaction. They use formulae and equations such as Arrhenius's equation well and with accuracy.
219. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. In the lessons observed, the teachers showed a good understanding of the subject and the syllabus. For example, in a Year 13 lesson, the likely errors in calculations were pointed out to students before they attempted any, so that they were forewarned about the difficulties and learned quickly how to use the techniques. Questions by students were handled well; for example, when a student asked why absolute potential could not be measured, the teacher had a good diagram on the overhead projector to explain this and subsequent discussion showed that the student had understood completely. The better lessons use a variety of teaching methods, concentrating on students' ideas and activity. For example, in a Year 12 lesson on rates of reaction, students were encouraged to explain in their own words why the shape of the Boltzmann distribution curve changes with temperature and the effect of this on reaction rates. They contributed ideas with enthusiasm and this was followed by a practical activity to test their hypotheses. Time is not always used to the full, as in one lesson where students completed an assessed practical. The more able who finished early were allowed to go 20 minutes before the end of the lesson, missing an opportunity for setting a further challenge. Students work well together and support each other's learning, especially in practical work. Individual guidance from teachers supports their learning and relationships are good.
220. Work out of lessons is well focused on supporting learning, using examination questions and challenging extras such as explanation of phosphorylation using the concept of redox potentials taught earlier. Any difficulties are followed up in future lessons. For example, work on transition metal compounds had not been fully understood by all students and the next lesson was used to explain this. Frequent tests are used to monitor students' progress. However, information from assessment could be better used to set targets, challenge students further and monitor progress. Enrichment opportunities are provided, for example, through spectroscopy courses run by the University of London. These also serve to encourage all students to progress to higher education.
221. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The head of department co-ordinates the work of the laboratory technician and the teachers who teach the subject. This task is made more difficult in Year 12 where three staff teach the same group, leading to some fragmentation of the syllabus. In Year 13, two teachers have clearly defined sections of the syllabus to cover. Monitoring of teaching has been very limited due to the shortage of staff in the science department and the need for all the teachers to teach in what was intended to be their non-contact time. There is no separate development plan for chemistry; the key issue of developing the use of ICT to support learning in the subject, is a priority for the whole science department. All teachers are well qualified and very experienced. They have undertaken relevant professional development and this has ensured up to date knowledge, which is put to good use in lessons. Technicians enhance the work of the department and support teachers very well. Accommodation and resources are good.

222. Chemistry was not specifically mentioned in the previous inspection report. However, standards and achievement have risen slightly over the last three years, indicating satisfactory improvement.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

Work was sampled in design and technology. Standards have been well below national averages and in line with students' results in other subjects. One lesson was observed and the teaching was satisfactory. Students worked with commitment on their practical project, guided and supported by observations and advice from their teacher.

BUSINESS

Business Studies

Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Results in GCE advanced business are in line with national averages.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good.
- Students' attitudes to work and to the subject are good.
- Relationships between students and their teachers are very good.
- The management of the subject is very good.

Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop their analytical skills, through greater use of numerical data.
- There is insufficient access to the Internet in order to enable more independent research for students in lesson time.
- The use of existing performance data is not used sufficiently to inform lesson planning and monitor the progress of students.

223. Standards overall are in line with national averages. Whilst standards for some courses offered within this area fell below the national average in 2001, for example, AS business, results for the A-level business studies course were in line with the national average for the first time in over three years. Ten students completed the course and six achieved a pass at grade C. Twenty one students were entered for the new AS level course, of which 18 achieved a grade within the B - E range. The reason why a large number of students following this one year course failed to achieve higher grades, only four gained grade C and above, can be attributed to the difficulties in recruiting a qualified teacher during the spring term 2001. All the students who achieved a grade at AS level are now following an A2 course in business. Two students completed a two year advanced business GNVQ. One achieved a distinction and the other a merit. Eleven students completed a GNVQ intermediate course of which one achieved a merit and seven a pass.

224. All students following a business course are attaining high standards in relation to their general prior attainment. This is particularly noteworthy given that not all have followed a business course before entering the sixth form. Students for whom English is an additional language or have been identified as having special educational needs attain good standards in this subject. The standard of work currently produced by students in Years 12 and 13 is closer to the national average for this stage in their course. For example, the recent assignments completed by Year 13 advanced business students were of particularly high quality. Students' folders, containing the notes recorded and research undertaken to support the development of this assignment, show gains in knowledge over the course of the unit. They show analytical thinking, as opposed to simply recording facts. Students following the advanced vocational course in Year 13 are currently undertaking work that will form the basis of an assignment on administrative operations. The work completed so far indicates that they all have a very good understanding of how companies function and the importance of good systems of communication within organisations.

225. Teaching within the department is satisfactory overall, but there is also very good teaching. All teachers have a very good knowledge of all aspects covered in this curriculum area. Where teaching is very good in about a third of lessons, students are taught in a lively and interactive way, which captures their interest. These lessons are thoroughly planned and incorporate a wide range of teaching methods to ensure that all students can and do achieve. High quality visual resources, produced by the teacher, are also a feature of very good teaching. As a direct result, students are well motivated and display very positive attitudes to learning. In a Year 13 lesson students were exploring the relationship between market research and research and development. As a result of this they then moved to follow the process of research and development through to product launch. They were encouraged to exchange ideas within the group and then apply the knowledge gained to answer the question "Why do you think the average spending on research and development by UK firms has increased since the 1990s?". As a direct result of the very good teaching they received in this lesson, all students were able to undertake the task with confidence and made good progress. In each lesson observed, the students were expected to recall knowledge gained from previous lessons and apply it to a new context.
226. Students are aware of their progress to date in relation to each unit of work completed. The comprehensive guide, produced by the department for the students to use throughout their course, clearly outlines the assessment criteria to be applied to each unit of work completed. The guide also explains what each grade means and the standards required to achieve them. All of the courses followed by the students in this area demand a high level of commitment, particularly in undertaking personal research. Facilities for students to undertake personal research within the school are limited. In lessons they are unable to access the Internet, which limits their learning opportunities.
227. The difficulties in staffing experienced by this department last year have now been resolved and the department is in a strong position to focus on raising attainment. To do this, data produced by the school needs to be used to inform lesson planning and to track the progress made by each individual student. At present the department is not using predictions available from a commercial package to monitor the progress of students as they move through their courses. As a result, teachers are not in a strong position to provide appropriate support for students who show signs of underachieving. More opportunities are needed for the students to review their own progress and, as a result, to work with staff to agree improvement targets. This would also contribute to raising the overall quality of teaching in the department from satisfactory to good.
228. Leadership and management of this curriculum area are satisfactory overall. The curriculum leader has very good management skills. She has produced a very comprehensive department handbook that includes a range of policies. A development plan has also been agreed and published which has a strong focus on raising achievement. Detailed schemes of work are in place for each course offered within this department and these are available to staff and students. The head of department is also the head of the humanities faculty and teamwork is a very strong feature of this faculty.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The school offers ICT and computer science. ICT was the focus of this inspection and work in computer science was sampled. Results in computer science were above the national average in 2001 and in the lessons observed teaching was good. In a lesson designing web sites, students researched the use of the Internet to improve their programming skills. The best of students' work is well presented, displaying appropriate use of applications such as desktop publishing. In comparison with their prior attainment most students are making good progress and the achievement of students during their computer science course is generally good.

Information and communication technology

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Students' attitudes to the subject are good and there are good relationships between students and their teachers.
- Examination results are improving.
- The pupil computer ratio is good.

Areas for improvement

- Students' project management skills are weak, so that all students do not complete the necessary coursework.
- Teaching is not consistent, especially setting objectives and plenary sessions to secure learning.
- There is insufficient monitoring of the department's work.

229. The examination results in AS-level in 2001 were below the national average. A full range of evidence, observation of lessons, discussions with teachers and students and scrutiny of students' work during the inspection indicates that attainment at A level is now in line with national averages but below average in the AS level course.

230. In comparison with their prior attainment most students make satisfactory progress. Students in both Years 12 and 13 design and produce web sites, research the use of the Internet to improve their programming skills or generate creative ideas for commercial software products. The best work is well presented, displaying appropriate use of desktop publishing, and some students use photo-imaging well. Where achievement is at a less successful level about half of the students are not completing their projects to a time plan and as a result their standards become poor.

231. Students' attitudes and response to the subject are generally good. In the best lessons students are enthusiastic, productive and make considered contributions. They make particularly good use of the many opportunities to work collaboratively. Students retain high levels of commitment and concentration throughout lessons, displaying independent research skills and a well-organised approach to their day-to-day work. Where the response is weaker the students have less secure prior attainment and fail to manage their time appropriately.

232. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the good lessons the teacher plans well, with clear objectives that are shared with the students so that they know what to expect and what is expected of them. The teacher's very good subject knowledge and direct teaching promotes the students' confidence and creates a positive atmosphere for learning. Although opportunities for independent research are central to all the teaching, a significant number of students lack self-confidence and rely too heavily on following the teacher's directives. Their responses to teachers' questions are not always well considered, with some lacking in confidence to use appropriate technical terminology in their explanations. There are very good relationships between staff and students in all courses. In some lessons the ending is not well managed or the plenary planning is insufficient to establish a high quality of learning.

233. The leadership and management of the courses are sound overall. There are adequate resources for the courses, both in terms of software and hardware provision. Teachers are well qualified and have a range of appropriate experience for the courses being taught. However, less experienced staff have insufficient opportunities to develop their practice through regular monitoring and observing others' lessons. A well-organised school technician supports the courses appropriately, enabling a more efficient use of teachers' time. Progress since the previous inspection has been good, in that the courses have been established with the percentage of students attaining the higher grades rising in the last two years. However, monitoring of the courses and all students' progress is insufficient.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The A-level sports studies course was the focus of this inspection. The school also offers intermediate GNVQ leisure and tourism.

Sports studies

Overall, the quality of provision in sports studies is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Students' attitudes and approach are positive.
- There is a good vision for future developments to raise standards.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent.
- The key skills of communication, application of number and ICT are not developed well within the subject.

234. The GCE A-level examination results were below national averages in 2001. None of the nine candidates gained the higher A and B grades and the percentage of candidates gaining grades A - E was below national averages. This represents a small improvement over results in the previous two years and results are in line with students' prior attainment. The standard of work of the current Year 13 students is of a higher standard and in line with national averages.

235. In Year 12 students have acquired good knowledge and secure understanding of how energy is used differently in various physical activities. They apply this information well when relating it to their own experience. By the end of one lesson students had successfully analysed a sporting technique, based on their chosen sport, and planned an appropriate training schedule. Their research skills are improving but their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills do not support their work sufficiently. Year 13 students competently demonstrate an understanding of the links between nutrition and recovery and ergogenic aids. They were able to discuss their work confidently in order to clarify and enhance their understanding.

236. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In over half the lessons seen it was good. The most effective teaching involves high expectations of the students and a good pace to the lesson. Teachers have good knowledge of the examination board requirements and plan lessons appropriately. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Where teaching is less effective teachers do not share learning outcomes with students at the beginning of the lesson so that they are aware of what they are expected to achieve and further develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Some teaching does not have sufficiently high expectations of the students nor does it challenge the quality of their work. Students' interest and concentration are good. Students benefit from the teacher's good knowledge of the subject during whole class discussions. Teachers mark work promptly and write informative comments.

237. Students have positive attitudes to their work. They arrive in good time for their lesson and are well prepared. They are able to work well as individuals and also co-operate when working in pairs and small groups. Students relate well to one another and most are able to contribute to whole group discussions with confidence. Students use extra-curricular provision and the school's very good links with local clubs and coaches to improve the standard of their performance in their chosen sporting activities.

238. The leadership and management are satisfactory. Teachers work as a team. A good assessment procedure is in place and students' work is assessed regularly. Students are clear about the level at which they are working. However, there is insufficient intervention with individual students to enhance learning at their own level. The head of department has a good vision for future development, which should raise standards. Monitoring of teaching and learning is limited so that staff training is not well-founded on a clear identification of need. Accommodation and resources for practical work are satisfactory. However, the teaching space for theory lessons does not enhance learning appropriately.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The school does not offer any courses in health and social care.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art was the focus of this inspection. The school also offers music and media studies and work was sampled in these subjects. In media studies standards are in line with national averages. One lesson was observed and teaching was satisfactory. Students worked on a paired activity to produce a chart showing the major developments in the Hollywood system. The teacher gave good support to the groups. However, students' short-term recall lacked clarity and their work rate was leisurely. In music, numbers are small so national comparisons are not reliable. One lesson was observed and the teaching was excellent. The lesson was very well prepared and included exercises background information and a practical element. The teacher cleverly encouraged a student with limited ability and gave very good advice on how to approach questions.

Art

Overall, the quality of provision in art is **very good**.

Strengths

- Results in A-level examinations are very good.
- Teaching and learning of technical skills in a variety of media is very good.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient analysis and use of prior attainment data to ensure that students do not underachieve.
- The use of ICT to support learning in art is weak.

239. Standards at AS level in 2001 were very high, with every student in the group of eight gaining a grade A or B. Standards at A level in 2001 were again very high with every student gaining grade A.

240. Standards of work seen during the inspection were very good in a variety of media, including sculptural work and photography with students making very good progress by the end of Year 13. Higher attaining students in both Years 12 and 13 show excellent painting skills, for example, in personal responses to 11th September and in observational work based on shells and starfish, which one student developed into a large three-dimensional piece successfully exploring texture. Sketchbooks are extremely well documented with good quality annotation explaining the process of developing a theme. Most students who visited Kew Gardens show their skills at recording plants and landscapes from observation and relate this to the work of other artists who influence them. One higher attaining student discussed the influences of Cezanne on his landscape work at Kew and his observation of buildings near the school.

241. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. High standards are expected of students. There is very good teaching of technical skills in a wide variety of media and the inclusion of visits enhance learning. Marking is extremely thorough and the high quality feedback leaves students in no doubt how to improve their work. These practices are very successful. Learning is very good due to the quality of independent enquiry of students, who research subjects thoroughly, make return visits to places of interest and higher attaining students who document their work meticulously. Photography has recently been introduced at AS level and standards are not as high as in other areas. The lack of computers in the art department prevents students from developing their skills in using ICT and using these to support learning in art.

242. The work of the department is well led and managed. Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out effectively and the procedures for monitoring and assessing the progress of students are very good. Policies make expectations clear and the development plan has appropriate priorities. Sixth form students have a studio where they can work outside lesson times. The art rooms have stimulating displays of work in every room and examples of exciting and interesting work are all around the school. Sixth form students are involved in plans to improve an outside quadrangle with sculptural work and murals which will enhance the environment considerably.

243. Since the last inspection standards have risen and the subject is becoming more popular. Attention has been paid to developing more expressive, personal responses to themes and students' attitudes toward the subject have improved, evident in the high quality journals produced by most students. AS-level photography has been introduced and there is a good quality liaison between teachers and parents of students. Progress since the last inspection is therefore good.

HUMANITIES

History was the focus of this inspection. The school also offers geography and work was sampled. Sociology and psychology are offered at other schools in the consortium. In geography, results are in

line with national averages. Two lessons were observed and teaching is satisfactory overall. The teachers' probing comments encouraged the students to develop their understanding and they showed good understanding of issues such as globalisation and urbanisation.

History

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- Students in Year 13 make good progress.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- Students' attitudes to the subject are good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Areas for improvement

- Improving the use of assessment data and information to monitor progress.
- Many students lack the necessary skills of independent research and evaluation of sources of information.

244. The average points score of students who took their history A levels in 2001 was well below the national average. No student attained a grade A or B and the percentage of students who attained in the grade range A - C was considerably lower than is attained in schools nationally. In two of the last three years the percentage of students attaining a grade A - C was below the national average. Evidence seen during the course of the inspection indicates that the attainment of students currently in Year 13 is higher than it has been in previous years and is broadly in line with what is seen nationally. This is borne out by the attainment of these students in their AS levels at the end of Year 12 when, of the small number taking the examination, the majority attained grades A or B. This represents improvement since the previous inspection when results at A level were below the national average.

245. A significant majority of students who took A level in 2001 did not attain their predicted grade and did less well than their GCSE results indicated they should do. Staffing difficulties experienced by the school had an adverse impact on the progress made by students. However, this situation has been resolved and the achievement of the current Year 13 is good. The high grades being predicted for them by their teachers are realistic. These students are making particularly good progress in the way in which they use a full range of historical detail and references to illustrate and justify their opinions.

246. Students in Year 13 have a satisfactory understanding of complex historical situations and good command of historical source material which enables them to make evaluations and draw conclusions. For example, students studying the part played by the American president at the Treaty of Versailles used information from a good range of sources, including primary documentary evidence, the writing of well-known historians and video in order to build up a full picture of the opinions and priorities of the president. The written style of students in both Years 12 and 13 is generally clear and accurate. Students' notes are well organised and they make good use of these and the additional documentary material provided by teachers to plan and structure their written answers effectively. All students make good use of a wide range of discussion, including role-play and mock interviews, in order to explore and expand their opinions. Many students have a limited vocabulary and this restricts the precision with which they are able to express their ideas. Some students, especially those in Year 12, make very little reference to the ideas of well-known historians and do not read sufficiently widely in the subject. This was also commented on in the previous inspection report.

247. Students' attitudes are good. They show their interest by asking questions, making observations and joining in discussions with enthusiasm. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when students were judged to not participate in the exchange of views. They work hard on their assignments in class and retain good levels of concentration. A group of students who spend a whole morning each week on history lessons maintained their interest and commitment

throughout that time and finished the lengthy session full of enthusiasm for the task on which they were engaged. Teachers' records suggest that some students, mainly in Year 12, do not have a consistently conscientious attitude to homework, which is frequently handed in late.

248. The quality of teaching is consistently good and in one lesson seen it was very good. Good detailed lesson planning meets the needs of all students across the range of attainment. Teachers plan a wide range of imaginative assignments, which make complex issues more accessible to all students and also help to maintain high levels of commitment. For example, students prepared a series of "talking heads" in order to illustrate the attitude to the Great Depression found in different sections of society. These show that students made good progress in understanding the range of contemporary responses to an historical situation and the factors that form these responses. Teachers make good use of questioning and, in particular, of discussion to support pupils in the way in which they use historical evidence to inform their opinions and conclusions. A very large majority of the teaching involves heavy student participation in the learning process. Teachers provide students with a good range of additional reading material in the form of extracts and articles and offer good advice on the independent reading they should do. This is proving successful with Year 13 students, who are beginning to refer to these additional sources of information in their written work. The policy of carrying out regular checks of students' files with written feedbacks on the way these are completed and organised represents very good practice, since it serves to make clear to students their own responsibility in maintaining files which will be useful for reference and revision purposes. Marking is good and offers substantial advice to students on the improvement of their performance.
249. The leadership and management of history in the sixth form are good. The recently appointed head of department has already made an impact in several areas. There is a good scheme of work for each topic studied, which suggests a good range of activities and offers clear support to all teachers of A-level history. The production of these involved good collaborative working between teachers. There are systems in place to monitor the performance of each student closely and frequently, although as yet this frequent monitoring relates only to students' attitudes and response to their work rather than their attainment. Insufficient use is made of the information that is already available from a range of sources on students' attainment in order to predict attainment, measure progress and identify potential underachievement. Having identified insufficient "reading around" the subject as a weakness in students' performance, resources have been wisely used to obtain a good range of up-to-date additional texts for students' use and to familiarise them with the services offered by the public library. There is a good policy of offering A-level history students the opportunity to take part in special sixth form history conferences and students derive considerable benefit from these.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English literature was the focus of this inspection. Communication studies and English language are also offered at other schools in the consortium.

English Literature

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Students undertake a good range of activities and written assignments which promote their progress.
- Teaching is always satisfactory and half the teaching seen during the inspection was good.

Areas for improvement

- Students' independent research skills are not sufficiently developed.
- Assessment information is not used sufficiently to measure and improve students' progress.
- The schemes of work for each topic covered are inadequate.

250. Results in A level in 2001, based on the average points scored by students, were below the national average. The percentage of students who attain in the A - C range and the average points scored has been below the national average for the past three years. A full range of evidence seen during the course of the inspection also indicates that attainment is below what is seen nationally. This represents an apparent decline in standards since the previous inspection when standards were in line with the national average. However, the numbers taking the course have increased considerably and there is a wide range of attainment amongst students at the start of the A-level course. A significant minority of students have attained a grade C in their GCSE and these students would not in general be expected to go on to attain high A-level grades.
251. Taking into account the relatively low prior attainment of students, achievement during the A-level course is generally satisfactory. Students make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of a wide range of set texts and also in the way in which they organise and structure their notes and written assignments. Students who are currently in Year 13 made good progress during Year 12 and approximately half attained the higher grades in their AS levels.
252. The written style of students is clear and correct and in Year 13 some higher attaining students write using a very fluent and authoritative style. Students in both year groups generally have clear knowledge and understanding of their texts and use this in order to form opinions and draw conclusions. For example, students discussing Thomas Hardy's "The Return of the Native" were able to use their understanding of the text in order to compare the attitudes of a number of characters at different levels of the social scale. Students make good use of the many opportunities for discussion in order to learn from hearing the ideas of others by comparing them with their own. Most students experience more difficulty with poetry than they do with prose and all but the highest attainers find it very difficult to approach an unfamiliar piece of verse. The vocabulary of many students is rather restricted and this leads to the use of colloquialisms and inappropriate terminology. In general, pupils organise and structure their notes efficiently and these provide appropriate support for subsequent reference and revision. Many students lack the skills of independent research and are not able to sufficiently evaluate or compare sources of information. Lower attaining pupils experience difficulty in selecting quotations and textual references and their written assignments are insufficiently detailed.
253. The attitude and response of students to the subject is satisfactory. Students are keen to participate in lessons, especially when the topic is of particular interest to them. They respond seriously and with interest to the ideas and opinions of others and they make good use of discussion as a valuable learning tool. The previous inspection report commented on a similar situation of students listening carefully to each other. Some students do not take their homework seriously enough, handing work in late and coming to lessons insufficiently prepared. A significant minority express dislike of reading.
254. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. All teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and half was good. Teachers plan lessons well and provide a good range of activities to meet the learning needs of all students across the range of attainment and to maintain interest. Many of these activities include the active participation of students and on these occasions students respond well and make good progress. Teachers make good use of questioning to make students extend their thinking and offer good opportunities for discussion. One particularly well-planned and resourced discussion on the theme of "what is literature?" prompted students to discuss this topic in some depth and they made good progress in their understanding of what constitutes good quality writing. When teaching is more formal and offers students only very limited opportunities to participate, many students either lose interest in the topic or find it difficult to follow the teacher's explanations. The marking of work is regular and supportive, but is not always substantial or rigorous enough to give students clear guidance on what they need to do to improve.
255. The leadership and management of English in the sixth form are satisfactory overall. The head of department is newly appointed and has, appropriately, devoted most attention to the younger age groups, so that impact on sixth form provision is more limited. However, appropriate areas for development have been identified in relation to curriculum planning and departmental monitoring of

performance. Currently the lack of schemes of work for topics and a structured overview of when each of these topics should be covered provides insufficient support for individual teachers. Planning for the future is also correct in setting up systems to 'track' and record students' attainment and to identify students who may be underperforming. However, there is an insufficient awareness of the range of information that is already available on students' progress and this is not used effectively. Good use is made of the school proximity to London to offer frequent theatre trips to A-level students.

LANGUAGES

German was the focus of this inspection.

German

Overall, the quality of provision in German is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- The numbers of students choosing to study German is increasing.
- Students receive very good support outside timetabled lessons.

Areas for improvement

- The examination performance of students at AS level did not reflect their prior attainment.
- Co-ordination across the consortium is not adequate to ensure consistently good provision.

256. In the past students wishing to continue with German after GCSE have had to study at one of the consortium schools which offered German as an A-level subject. For this reason the number of students taking German has been very small; four students over four years. These students gained A-level results that were below the national average. However, the decision to offer German as an A-level subject at this school from September 2000 has resulted in larger numbers of students taking the subject. Eight students are currently studying German in Years 12 and 13. The teaching of the subject is shared equally between Isleworth and Syon School and another school in the consortium. AS-level results in 2001 of the three students now in Year 13 were below what had been expected of them, given their attainment in German GCSE. However, in the work seen during the inspection standards are now similar to the national average in both Years 12 and 13.

257. In the course of the year students in Year 12 have gained in confidence in speaking German. They have the vocabulary and idiom necessary to discuss the role of the father in modern western society and have sound understanding of German spoken at near-native speed. In their writing they show a secure grasp of some of the more complex features of German grammar such as adjectival endings and the change of word order. These students have cleared the large intellectual divide between GCSE and AS-level and are achieving to their potential.

258. Year 13 students understand advanced German spoken fast and make good sense of German people speaking and singing on video and audio tapes. In one lesson, for example, students were able to pick out key words from a contemporary song and transcribe them successfully to paper. They are familiar with the text and characterisation of a classic 20th century play in German and, although diffident in speaking, have the language needed to make a case for the play's status as a tragi-comedy. In their writing Year 13 students show important gaps in their understanding of German grammar and their knowledge of advanced vocabulary. These students are not yet fulfilling the promise of their GCSE results in this part of their course.

259. Teaching in Isleworth and Syon School only was observed. It is good overall. Teachers are competent speakers of German and use the language consistently in the classroom, so that students are used to hearing German and consequently make good gains in their listening skills. Lessons have clear aims and are planned with imagination to ensure that a good variety of activities both maintains students' interest and exercises all four language skills. Year 13

students have an entire morning of German with four consecutive lessons interrupted only by a 20-minute break. After a demanding session discussing the conflicting aspects of a play in German, the teacher showed a recently recorded video clip of a German news broadcast. This allowed the students to wind down successfully and at the same time called different language skills into play. Teachers also make good use of the Internet and other up to date resources to introduce students to a broad spectrum of contemporary German culture and society. In a Year 12 lesson, for example, some recently downloaded material from an educational website provided interesting new insights into the topic of young persons in society. Students responded well to this and learnt a great deal from it.

260. Through high expectations and a good knowledge of their students as individuals, teachers have established a very good working relationship with them. Students have received a lot of extra help and guidance from their teachers beyond the classroom. They have individual tutorials with the German assistant to improve their fluency and have made exchanges with German students. Students learn well as a result of this strong teaching and appreciate the quality of provision they receive from their German teachers at the school. They are mature and attentive students, listen carefully to taped material and show real interest in the subject. When given the opportunity they work independently and complete the work set for them on time. When they do not understand something they feel comfortable to ask appropriate, and often very perceptive, questions.
261. As a result of careful planning and efficient organisation, German is now well established as an A-level subject in the school. The two teachers are well-qualified specialists and work together closely as a team. Students benefit greatly from the help of a full-time German assistant and from the department's good resources and access to up-to-date computers. Assessment of students' work is rigorous and frequent. However, students feel they need more detailed and regular feedback on their progress so that they can place their performance in a wider context. Teachers have some contact with their counterparts in the other school in the consortium where their students are taught. However, this contact is too intermittent and informal to be of maximum benefit in terms of securing students' progress and sharing good practice to ensure consistent provision.